

JULY 2025

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# Mid-Year Report 2025

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# Message from the Executive Director

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are six months into a new administration that has wasted no time reshaping our country's immigration landscape. Through sweeping executive actions; aggressive deportations and interior enforcement; workforce restrictions that threaten talent mobility, revoke visas, and restrict green card pathways for working immigrants; and legal machinations designed to eliminate due process for immigrants and immigrant families, the Trump administration has exacerbated already high levels of fear and uncertainty in immigrant communities both across the country and globally. The stakes have never felt more urgent — for millions of immigrant men, women, and children, for the communities that welcome them, for our shared economy, and for the future of democracy itself.

The American Immigration Council is meeting this moment with clarity, determination, and a deep sense of responsibility. We are using every tool at our disposal to protect rights, promote fairness, and equip leaders to take action. From impact litigation and transparency efforts that hold the government accountable, to research and storytelling that uplift the contributions of immigrants nationwide, to national campaigns that reach millions with messages of welcome — we are working to build the future we all deserve. We have also mobilized every part of our organization — leveraging the strength, expertise, and convening power of our legal, policy, advocacy, state and local, and communications teams to push back against harmful federal actions, advance practical people-centered solutions, and defend the rights and dignity of immigrants nationwide. We've already secured major victories this year: blocking the government from disappearing an asylum seeker to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador without due process, and winning asylum for a Russian dissident and LGBTQ+ activist, a supporter of Alexei Navalny, who entered through the CBP One app but was detained in the U.S. for over a year..

While the federal government has doubled down on division, states and cities across the country have stepped up to lead. Local leaders, advocates, and allies are working together to defend their communities and advance new policies that promote inclusion, economic opportunity, and community safety. The Council is proud to stand with these changemakers — providing legal expertise, data, policy tools, and strategic messaging to help them succeed in the face of relentless federal pressure.

The road ahead will not be easy, and will demand courage, persistence, deep financial investments, and collaboration. And with committed partners like you by our side, we are ready to continue this work — defending what's at stake, standing with immigrant communities, and building toward a more just, more inclusive America for all.



**Jeremy Robbins**  
Executive Director

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, sweeping 'J' followed by a series of connected loops and a final upward stroke.

## MID-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- Stopping the Trump Administration from Disappearing Migrants to El Salvador:** A federal judge blocked the Trump administration from disappearing a Venezuelan asylum seeker, using the initials YAPA, without due process under the Alien Enemies Act while his asylum case is pending. YAPA has been in ICE detention since February and lived in constant fear that he would be sent to CECOT, El Salvador's notorious maximum-security prison. Now, thanks to the Council's habeas petition, YAPA is protected until the court decides what procedures are constitutionally required to determine whether a person is subject to the Alien Enemies Act.
- Winning Asylum for Immigrants Unjustly in Detention:** The Council's Immigration Justice Campaign (IJC) helped Ilia Chernov, a Russian dissident, win his asylum case in a Louisiana immigration court. Ilia entered the U.S. as the government requested, via an appointment at a port of entry at the southern border, but despite winning his case, he is still in detention as of publication – where he is facing abuse and no timeline for release. After fighting for him in the legal process, the Council is now activating our network of advocates to take action to pressure U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for his release.
- Resisting Harmful Federal Crackdowns:** In the face of draconian enforcement tactics, the Council doubled down on its role as a trusted nonpartisan resource for Congress. In early 2025, we briefed more than 30 members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and gave testimony before the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement, providing essential legal context on looming executive actions that could weaken due process, strip away asylum protections, and ramp up detention. We also offered rapid analysis of immigration funding provisions in Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill" to help elected officials and the public understand the dangerous implications of unprecedented levels of funding and new immigrant fees that will have seismic impact on the U.S. immigration system and immigrants across the country. These efforts helped keep immigrant rights at the center of the debate, ensuring that policymakers heard from experts grounded in both the law and lived experience.
- Uncovering the Hidden Toll of ICE Transfers:** When reports surfaced of ICE transferring detained immigrants to remote locations – isolating them from legal support – the Council took action. We filed a request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and a subsequent lawsuit, demanding transparency on this harmful practice. At the same time, our Immigration Justice Campaign (IJC) is documenting personal stories from those affected, building a record that will help the public – and policymakers – understand the human cost of these transfers.
- Bringing Legal Help Within Reach for Detained Asylum Seekers:** In response to shrinking access to legal counsel in detention, IJC launched a new national hotline empowering detained individuals to seek legal help directly, in their own language, without waiting for in-person outreach. Piloted in Georgia, this scalable system allows asylum seekers to access counsel even as attorney access to detention centers becomes increasingly limited.
- Expanding Legal Services in High-Need Regions:** IJC forged new partnerships with legal service providers, including in Louisiana, New Mexico, Texas, and Georgia, extending our reach into some of the country's most isolated detention centers. Through these partnerships, we have placed dozens of cases with trained volunteers and grown our docket of active clients seeking protection and safety.

## MID-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Providing High-Quality Legal Representation:** As in-person court appearances and remote location barriers drive up costs, IJC launched the IJC Access Fund to ensure cases do not go unsupported because of geography or language. The fund covers volunteer travel expenses and provides interpretation services for clients who speak rare or Indigenous languages. By working to remove these logistical and financial hurdles, IJC is strengthening its ability to deliver high-quality pro bono legal representation to those who need it most – no matter where they are detained.
- ▶ Putting the Economic Contributions of All Immigrants on the Map:** This year, the Council released a major update to Map the Impact, our flagship data visualization tool, incorporating the latest national and state-level data on economic and demographic contributions of immigrants, including undocumented individuals, DACA recipients, TPS holders, and mixed-status families. By spotlighting these often-overlooked communities, the tool offers a clearer picture of the critical contributions immigrants make across the country, including fueling key industries, creating jobs, and paying billions in taxes. We also made the tool available in Spanish for the first time to increase accessibility.
- ▶ Equipping Thousands to Fight Disinformation and Take Action:** In the first half of 2025, over 9,000 people – including journalists, congressional staff, nonprofit leaders, and legal advocates – joined the Council’s webinars to cut through noise and misinformation. Our January “What Does It All Mean?” session set a new record with more than 3,000 registrants. These high-impact, interactive briefings provide real-time analysis that empowers participants to respond to shifting narratives, defend immigrant rights, strengthen advocacy across the country, and get their questions answered in real time.
- ▶ Defending In-State Tuition for Texas Dreamers:** When Texas lawmakers threatened to repeal the Texas Dream Act, the Council stepped up with economic analysis showing what was at stake: \$461 million in annual loss in economic activity. By partnering with diverse stakeholders and lifting up the statewide impact, we successfully fought back and protected this critical pathway to higher education for thousands of Texas students and safeguarded the state’s long-term workforce and prosperity.
- ▶ Reaching New Narrative Milestones:** This year, Belonging Begins with Us, the Council’s narrative change communications platform with the Ad Council, surpassed \$100 million in donated media placements, reaching over 8 billion impressions. In a time of deep division, the campaign’s powerful stories of welcome and unity resonated across the country – appearing on major platforms like NFL Network, streaming services, and digital billboards.

Read further to learn about the many ways we are working throughout our programs and collaborations to accomplish our mission.



## IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



**2M+**

Immigrants Impacted by the Non-Citizen Registration Requirement We Are Challenging



**25,000+**

Supporters in Our Immigration Justice Campaign Network



**130**

Immigration Cases Placed with a Pro Bono Attorney



**18**

Cases Won by Our Immigration Justice Campaign



**<48 hrs**

Our Turnaround to Analyze 10 Day One Executive Orders



**900+**

State Legislative Bills Tracked and Reported to Partners and Stakeholders



**24**

States Participating in Our Bipartisan Office of New Americans State Network



**11,070**

Media Mentions of the Council's Staff and Resources



**58**

Immigration Impact Blog Posts



**\$100M+**

Belonging Begins with Us Donated Media Since 2020



**250%**

Year-Over-Year Increase in Traffic to Our Website

# Programmatic Updates

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## Advancing a Just and Equitable Immigration System:

Policy, Litigation, Transparency,  
and the Immigration Justice Campaign

# POLICY

*“I feel compelled because as a Venezuelan immigrant, I know that if America fails to push back on these Trump actions or loses the fight for due process and basic rights now, we might all lose this American home as we know it — forever.”* – [Congressional testimony of “Beatriz”](#) featured in the Council’s upcoming six-months of Trump report

## Pushing Back Against Dangerous Policies

Deepening engagement with Congress to resist harsh, indiscriminate enforcement has been a cornerstone of the Council’s policy strategy in 2025. In the first half of the year, the Council has briefed dozens of members of Congress, offering legal context and strategic framing around anticipated executive actions and the rapidly changing policy landscape. These conversations focused on enforcement authority, the legal boundaries of “Day One” executive orders, and the potential consequences for immigrant communities and U.S. institutions.

Several weeks into the new Trump administration, the policy team also led a briefing of senior-level Senate staffers to discuss the implications of newly announced policies including a non-citizen registration process. The policy team also helped lead a member-level briefing for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to help over 30 congressional members prepare for the first six months of Trump. In addition to these briefings, the Council meets frequently with individual members of Congress to offer expertise on the changes to law and policy.

This work builds on our role as a trusted resource for members of Congress and their staff, especially during politically charged moments when credible, nonpartisan guidance is most needed. These briefings lay the groundwork for continued dialogue across the aisle and help ensure that immigrant rights remained central to congressional conversations in 2025.

Based on our strong relationships and frequent briefings, the Council was invited to [testify before the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement](#), warning against proposals that would heighten detention, narrow asylum access, and weaken due process at the border. Our remarks offered a clear-eyed analysis of the legal and humanitarian impacts of these proposals and highlighted the need for solutions that uphold both security and fundamental rights.



The Council’s policy team also provided rapid analysis of President Trump’s “Big Beautiful Bill,” a reconciliation funding package in Congress that will make seismic changes to the immigration system in addition to core American programs like Medicaid. Through written analysis, engagement with members of Congress, and staff-level congressional briefings, the policy team helped leaders understand the impact and implications of an unprecedented funding bill that will supercharge the administration’s mass deportation efforts.



## Rapid Response to High-Stakes Executive Proposals

On his first day in office, President Trump signed no less than 10 executive orders and proclamations related to immigration and the southern border. The Council responded rapidly and released a [comprehensive legal and policy analysis within 48 hours](#). The analysis broke down the scope and implications of proposed measures, including mass deportation, reinstated travel bans, and new barriers to asylum. In a moment of unprecedented change, the Council offered Hill staff, media, and advocacy partners a credible framework to understand what was being implemented — and what it could mean for the nation. In the subsequent weeks of the new administration, the Council similarly translated new, complex immigration policies for lay audiences including through comprehensive written analysis of the new non-citizen registration process and regarding the invocation of a little-known “mass influx” provision in immigration law.



This analysis was widely disseminated; more than 167,000 people viewed the Council’s “Day One” executive order analysis, which provided timely clarity in a fast-moving news cycle and reinforced the Council’s value as a steadying force during moments of uncertainty. The analysis has already been shared broadly and continues to be cited as a foundational resource for those preparing to counter harmful proposals.

This month the policy team will add to its analysis of Trump policies with a published report on the first six months of Trump which documents the administration’s unprecedented changes to immigration policy since January. The report highlights five themes to help audiences digest these seismic shifts while also sharing the stories of those directly impacted. The report focuses on the ways in which the Trump administration has used immigration to attack core democratic rights and principles while undermining the United States’ standing in the world. It lays out for readers, six months into Trump, who the United States is allowing to enter, how the United States is treating immigrants who are already here in our country, and who we are targeting for deportation and departure from our country.

## Advancing a Vision for Humane, Effective Immigration Policy

Even as the Council responds to immediate threats, the policy team continues to shape long-term solutions rooted in research and real-world impact. Through its publications, direct outreach, and press engagement, the Council is helping to reframe the national conversation around enforcement, legal immigration, and system modernization.

The Council also continues to promote pragmatic reforms, including greater access to work authorization, improvements to immigration court structure and backlog reduction, and the expansion of legal pathways. The policy team is working with congressional members on both sides of the aisle to offer technical and substantive expertise on bi-partisan immigration bills that have potential for growing support in the coming months. In particular, the policy team worked alongside the state and local team to garner support from business leaders in key states to push back against joint House and Senate resolutions that proposed to overturn the 540-day automatic renewal period for work authorization, which the Council led a coalition of advocates to push for in 2024. The Council engaged our partners in the policy and business communities to advocate against expedited action on this — and the Senate did not take action within their 60-day window to fast-track the resolution. This is a powerful example of how the Council’s relationship with businesses and policymakers alike empowers us to fight for and protect inclusive immigration policy.



# LITIGATION

*We use the courts to demand a fair process for immigrants by challenging unjust policies and laws.*

## Criminalization of Immigrant Communities

This year, the Council's litigation team has led consequential challenges to the administration's mass deportation agenda. In March 2025, the Council filed *The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security*, a legal challenge to a new federal rule requiring millions of immigrants to register with the government and carry proof of registration at all times — or face criminal prosecution. The rule, issued without public notice or opportunity for comment, revives a long-dormant provision of immigration law and marks a significant escalation in the criminalization of immigrant presence.

Filed in partnership with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)'s Immigrants' Rights Project, the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, and CASA, the lawsuit alleges violations of both the Administrative Procedure Act and the Fifth Amendment. Plaintiffs in the lawsuit are the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, United Farm Workers of America, CASA, and Make the Road New York. Within weeks, the Council filed a complaint and motion for preliminary injunction. We are now seeking a motion for injunction pending appeal. The case is a critical challenge to an attempt to turn the United States into a "carry your papers" country.

## Challenging Indefinite Detention and the Misuse of Wartime Powers

Meanwhile, the Council is challenging the administration's horrific practice of holding Venezuelan citizens incommunicado at El Salvador's Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT), a maximum-security facility internationally condemned for its harsh and abusive conditions. In April, we filed two habeas corpus petitions: the first to challenge the ongoing detention of a Venezuelan man already in CECOT and the second to prevent the transfer to CECOT of another Venezuelan man detained by ICE in Georgia.

In *Quintero v. Dickerson*, we represent Edicson David Quintero Chacón, a 28-year-old father of two who was detained by ICE for eight months before he was disappeared — without warning — to CECOT. Mr. Quintero remains imprisoned there, incommunicado, despite having filed a habeas petition in February (before the government sent him to El Salvador) asking to be released based on the government's inability to carry out his removal to Venezuela. We filed an amended habeas petition to seek relief against this indefinite, punitive detention at CECOT.

A second habeas petition, *YAPA v. Trump*, filed on behalf of a Venezuelan asylum seeker detained in Georgia, seeks to prevent the government from removing him under the Alien Enemies Act (AEA) without due process and the ability to contest the government's baseless accusations of gang membership. This case seeks emergency relief barring his disappearance, to CECOT or elsewhere, without due process, and challenges the government's use of the AEA. Together, these filings are part of a broader legal effort to affirm the right to due process and to prevent the

government's unprecedented use of indefinite, punitive, extraterritorial detention through the unlawful invocation of extraordinary war powers. In May, YAPA won a preliminary injunction barring his removal under the AEA while the habeas case proceeds.

## Protecting the Right to Seek Asylum

In June, the Council filed another major suit, *Al Otro Lado, Inc., et al. v. Trump, et al.*, our third class-action lawsuit challenging policies of turning back individuals approaching ports of entry along the southern border without allowing them to seek asylum in the United States, as is their right under the law. While our previous two lawsuits challenged iterations of a policy of “metering,” including by requiring asylum seekers to make an appointment through the CBP One app, this suit challenges a new U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) policy that effectively eliminates the ability for anyone to seek asylum by approaching a port of entry. The new policy, arising out of one of President Trump’s “Day One” Executive Orders, also cancelled all 30,000 scheduled CBP One appointments, leaving people who had relied on the government’s previously mandated process to seek asylum from 2023 through early 2025 in indefinite limbo. The plaintiffs include the organizations Al Otro Lado and Haitian Bridge Alliance, and eleven asylum seekers stranded in Mexico who seek access to the asylum process at ports of entry.



The filing of this third case demonstrates the Council’s deep commitment to fighting for the right to seek asylum.

## Challenging Discriminatory State Policies

In June, the Council filed *Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America v. Finney* challenging Tennessee’s Senate Bill 392. Signed into law on May 9, the bill creates sweeping criminal penalties for any individual or organization that “harbors” a person who is undocumented — a term that the bill defines to include providing shelter — for financial benefit. This sweeping bill could make it criminal for a church to offer temporary shelter, a landlord to rent out a room, or a family member to live with a person who is undocumented. Additionally, the law is written so broadly that it could be used to criminalize providing shelter to those who were once undocumented but subsequently obtained protected status like asylum or protection under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Together with our co-counsel at Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection (ICAP) at Georgetown Law, the American Immigration Council, and the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), we are seeking an immediate injunction to block enforcement while the case proceeds.

## Equipping the Field with Strategic Resources

In addition to playing a key leadership role in urgent litigation to challenge overreach in interior enforcement, the Council continues to serve as a national hub for litigation strategy and attorney support. In 2025, we published an [updated practice advisory](#) detailing guidance for requesting stays before the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), immigration courts, the Board of Immigration Appeals, and federal courts. It is a vital tool in a year where removal timelines have shortened, and field attorneys are navigating new pressures in real time.

# TRANSPARENCY

*Through our Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) filings, we play a leading role in shedding light on immigration policies and information that is otherwise shielded from the public eye.*

## Filing for Records on ICE Transfers Amid Growing Public Scrutiny

Prior to the escalating public and media concern about ICE's practice of transferring people in detention to remote facilities, the Council, along with the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN), filed a FOIA request seeking internal agency records on this practice. Then, reports surfaced of the Trump administration moving high-profile individuals from northern facilities to detention centers in Louisiana — isolating them from legal representation and community support. The Council's request became crucial to understanding these transfers.

Transfers like these have serious consequences. They sever access to attorneys, disrupt legal proceedings, and make it harder for people to stay connected to family and community networks. Yet ICE has provided little public information about how often these transfers occur or what policies guide them.

Recognizing the urgency of this issue, the Council requested expedited processing of the FOIA request to ensure the government releases relevant records while public attention remains high. The agency rejected our request to expedite the processing of our request. However, the Council and RMIAN sued ICE to obtain those records. As we await the results of our request, our IJC team is documenting the experiences of individuals we serve who are affected by these transfers — stories that can inform future publications and help the public understand the real human impact of this agency practice.

## Challenging USCIS's Suspension of Green Card Application Processing for Refugees and Asylees

In March, the Council responded to news that the Trump administration had suspended the processing of green card applications for tens of thousands of refugees and asylees. The suspension, affecting individuals who had already been granted humanitarian protection, left applicants with no clear information about how long they would have to wait for a decision on their path to permanent residency and eventual citizenship.

This suspension impacts some of the most vulnerable people in our immigration system — individuals who have already passed extensive security screening. Without clear timelines or public explanation, they are left in legal limbo.

To uncover the rationale behind this policy, the Council filed FOIA requests seeking internal DHS and USCIS records on the suspension's implementation. Our analysis of this issue has already reached a broad audience, with a Council [blog post](#) drawing over 250,000 views. The Council is partnering with AILA on this effort, positioning us to elevate stories from immigration attorneys working directly with affected clients. In June, the Council and AILA filed a lawsuit to compel the agencies to disclose information on this issue since the agencies failed to respond to our requests.

# IMMIGRATION JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

*“Because of the fear that all these laws would be used against me, at first I didn’t go out of my way to reveal myself.” –*  
[Russian asylum seeker, Ilia Chernov](#)

## Opening a Direct Line to Legal Help in Detention

In detention centers across the country, legal counsel is becoming much harder to reach. IJC has long depended on in-person referrals from legal service providers on the ground — but under the current administration, those providers face growing restrictions that limit their ability to conduct intakes or meet with potential clients. As these barriers have grown, the need for a new solution has become clear.

This year, IJC began building a national self-referral hotline, designed to give people in detention the power to reach out for legal help on their own — without waiting for an attorney or legal services partner to visit their facility. The hotline uses a scalable, keypad-based system, allowing callers to select their preferred language and leave critical information that IJC can use to prioritize callbacks. Once screened, callers are contacted by trained volunteer attorneys who conduct live intake interviews to identify cases that IJC can take forward. The Council will be undertaking an initial pilot of the hotline in a limited number of detention centers, working closely with our volunteers to test and refine the system. As we finalize our flow and recruit more volunteers, we anticipate expanding this hotline to more detention centers across the country and adding additional multilingual capacity, empowering thousands of detained individuals to contact us for legal assistance.

## Strengthening Regional Reach Through New Partnerships

In addition to building direct access through the hotline, IJC expanded its network of referral partnerships this year to meet rising demand in high-enforcement regions where legal services are in critically short supply. New partnerships with Immigration Services and Legal Advocacy (ISLA, in Louisiana), The New Jersey Public Defenders Office, Advocates for Immigrants (Tennessee), Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center (El Paso, Texas), the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center (NMILC), and the Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network (GAIN) have extended IJC’s reach into some of the most isolated and under-resourced detention centers in the country.

Through our referral partners, IJC continues to connect noncitizens — those in detention and other individuals who face significant barriers to counsel, like LGBTQ+ community members — with high-quality legal services. In 2025, we have made 153 volunteer placements on 92 cases, for a total of 212 active cases in our docket.

# 208

Volunteer placements across 130 cases, with a total of 344 active cases in our docket in 2025.

## FIGHTING FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS' RIGHTS

These partnerships have already delivered life-changing results. One of IJC's earliest referred cases this year involved Ilia, a 25-year-old Russian dissident and LGBTQ+ asylum seeker who fled government persecution after publicly opposing the war in Ukraine. After waiting eight months in Mexico for a CBP One appointment, Ilia entered the U.S. lawfully — only to be detained by ICE and held for nearly a year in Louisiana, despite having a community ready to support his release.

With IJC's representation, Ilia won his asylum case — armed with more than 900 pages of evidence documenting the threats he faced if returned to Russia. Yet, despite this clear legal victory, DHS has continued to detain him while pursuing an appeal many see as procedurally unfounded and politically motivated. Ilia's ongoing detention highlights the systemic barriers that persist even after immigrants win protection under U.S. law — and the critical role that organizations like the Council play in pushing back.

To continue fighting for Ilia, IJC activated 433 advocates to email the ICE Field Director in Louisiana. Ilia is still detained. He continues to assist others who are detained with him in their cases and raising awareness around the deteriorating conditions in the detention centers in Louisiana. This demonstrates the power of IJC's dual representation and advocacy model; when we had exhausted legal options to seek Ilia's release, we were able to quickly engage our community to take action together.

## Removing Barriers to Representation with the IJC Access Fund

While IJC's national network of volunteers stands ready to take more cases, new logistical and financial barriers are making it harder to match attorneys with clients in detention. Many of IJC's clients are held in remote facilities located hours from the nearest airport, far from the legal resources available in major cities. On top of that, the government's rollback of remote appearance options is forcing more attorneys to travel in person to hearings — raising the cost and complexity of taking on a case.

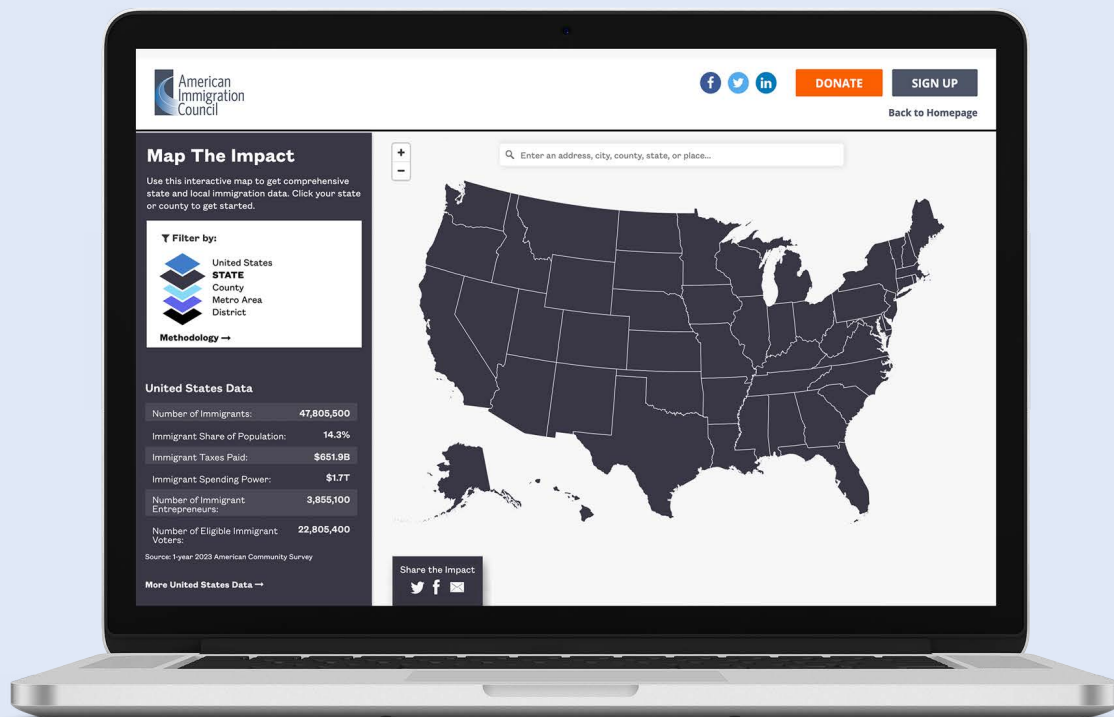
In response, the Council launched the [IJC Access Fund](#), a dedicated effort to cover volunteer travel costs and expand language access services for clients who speak rare or Indigenous languages. The fund allows IJC to remove the financial barriers that prevent volunteers from showing up when in-person representation is required. It also ensures that language never becomes a barrier to counsel, giving clients full access to interpreters when volunteer language support isn't available.

# \$56,800

Funds raised by end of June

# Informing Decisionmakers and the Public Discourse

Research and Communications and Storytelling





# RESEARCH

*“Somebody connected us with the American Immigration Council. We worked together for months as a coalition to draft a report, and that report was used at our press conference, we made sure we had it for every presentation, because we always wanted to have the personal story, but then also the data.”* – [Arizona community partner, Jose Aliento](#)

## Strengthening ‘Map the Impact’ with New Data

This year, we released a major update to [Map the Impact](#), the Council’s flagship data visualization tool, integrating the latest national and state-level findings from the 2023 American Community Survey. This update not only refreshed population and economic contribution data but also expanded the tool’s focus to highlight how the undocumented immigrant population is woven into local economies and communities — shedding light on their role in critical industries such as construction, agriculture, food services, and healthcare. This data offers a more complete picture of how restrictive immigration policies could harm entire sectors of the U.S. economy.

We presented this research to members of Congress and their staff, ensuring that federal policymakers and advocates alike have the tools to advance data-informed immigration solutions.

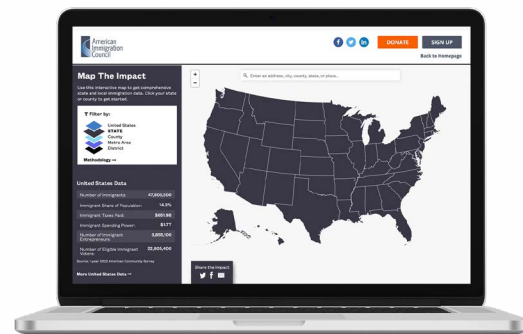
## Stepping Toward Language Accessibility

The Council launched a [Spanish version](#) of Map the Impact’s national and state pages — marking the first time we have released original research in a language other than English. By equipping Spanish-speaking immigrants, advocates, community

## OUR DATA IN ACTION

The real-world impact of this work was clear when the Tennessee Small Business Alliance used our findings to help defeat anti-immigrant legislation that threatened the state’s workforce and economy. The Alliance cited Map the Impact data to demonstrate that Tennessee’s immigrant population supports over 125,000 jobs and contributes more than \$9 billion to the state’s economy — an argument that resonated in both the media and the legislature.

leaders, and media outlets with accessible data, the Council is broadening the impact of its research and deepening engagement with diverse audiences nationwide.





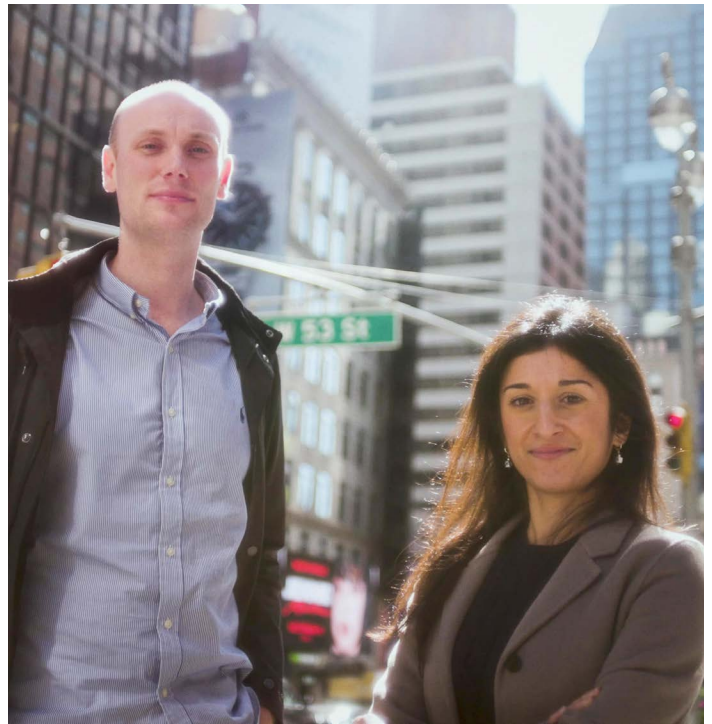
## Delivering Targeted State and Local Research to Inform Policy Fights

The Council also expanded its State and Local research portfolio, producing three new factsheets that spotlight immigrant contributions in key regions facing critical policy debates:

1. [New Mexico](#): Our research highlighted the state's growing demand for healthcare workers, revealing that immigrants make up nearly 10% of New Mexico's healthcare workforce, including roles in nursing, home health care, and oral hygiene, where demand has surged over 220% since 2019.
2. [Mid-Michigan](#): We detailed the economic and civic contributions of immigrants in the region who support local businesses, sustain critical industries, and help counter demographic decline in aging communities.
3. [Texas](#): Our report on Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents showcased the community's \$73.4 billion in spending power and \$27.3 billion in tax contributions, reinforcing the essential role API communities play in driving the Texas economy.

In total, we provided customized data support to 21 partners, including 12 state and local organizations and three national research partners. These tailored resources were used to advance inclusive immigration policies and push back against harmful state legislation.

In response to shifting national conversations about immigration enforcement and labor shortages — particularly in caregiving and healthcare — our research team completed 32 media interviews and data requests, ensuring accurate, timely information reached policymakers, journalists, and the public.



# COMMUNICATIONS AND STORYTELLING

*“The Council helped us during family separation. They connected us to a lot of media outlets to really uplift the experiences of our clients, they helped us place an op-ed that I helped co-write about the experience. Having worked in family detention and then experiencing what things looked like under family separation, really connecting the dots between the two and they (the Council) placed that in USA Today, which is certainly not an outlet we typically work with.”* – [Colorado immigration advocate, Laura Lunn](#)

## Shaping the National Discourse on Immigration

As public attention on immigration has intensified, the Council has emerged as an even more visible and trusted voice — helping the public make sense of complex issues and equipping allies with the information they need to respond with confidence and clarity. In the first half of 2025, the Council’s analysis and expertise have appeared in over 8,000 news stories — a nearly 400% increase compared to the same period last year. This extraordinary reach reflects the Council’s influence as a trusted voice at the center of the immigration debate, and our ability to meet the surge in demand for credible information across key audiences.

Major outlets across the country and around the world have turned to the Council for clarity on fast-moving developments. Among many others, our work has been cited in:

- [The Rachel Maddow Show](#)
- [NPR Marketplace](#)
- [The Ezra Klein Show](#)
- [USA Today](#)

- [Assembly Required with Stacey Abrams](#)
- [Time](#)
- [The Hill](#)
- [El País](#)
- [Al Jazeera](#)
- [Roll Call](#)
- [Newsweek](#)
- [MSNBC](#)
- [Axios](#)
- [the Miami Herald](#)
- [Forbes](#)
- [BBC](#)
- [ABC](#)
- [CNN](#)

These appearances are helping shape how policymakers, journalists, and millions of people understand the stakes — from border policy to legal challenges to the human impact behind the headlines.

## Take An Audience-First, Data-Driven Approach

This year, the Council has focused on an audience-centric brand communications strategy designed to meet people where they are — emotionally, culturally, and digitally. Grounded in data, this approach recognizes that public opinion on immigration falls along a spectrum, from supportive to conflicted to unsupportive. Rather than dismissing people’s fears or leading with facts alone, the Council seeks to acknowledge concerns, foster dialogue, and offer a vision that includes immigrants as part of the solution. We are tailoring messages by audience and platform, using trusted messengers and lived experiences to bridge divides and build lasting public support for inclusive immigration policies.

Early results show that this work is making a difference. In January alone, more than one million people visited the Council’s website — a first in our history — with more than half arriving through organic search as they sought credible information on breaking news topics like birthright citizenship, immigration and crime, and the impact of immigration enforcement on U.S. citizen children. Alongside this growth in visitors, the Council saw an increase in newsletter signups, donations, and time spent on the site, signaling that our strategy is not only reaching new audiences but also inspiring deeper involvement with our mission.

While the Council is in the early stages of this strategy, these early wins reinforce our belief that shifting the conversation requires more than facts. It requires listening, curiosity, and the willingness to try new approaches.



## Mobilizing Thousands Through High-Impact Webinars

While media coverage expands the Council’s reach, our live webinars provide a more direct way to engage the people working to advance change on the ground. Already in 2025, more than 10,000 people have joined these sessions, seeking timely insights they can trust.

Our January 2025 “What Does It All Mean?” webinar drew in over 3,000 registrants, making it the Council’s largest to date. Across all sessions, we netted over 2,160 participants, including Hill staffers, journalists, nonprofit leaders, and attorneys who rely on the Council’s expertise to navigate complex legal and policy developments.

These aren’t passive audiences. They are key messengers and decision-makers in their own right. Our webinars give them the tools they need to respond to shifting narratives, strengthen their advocacy, and share accurate information with the people and communities they influence. Designed for real-time relevance, these sessions deliver critical information and spark action. Through this growing community of engaged supporters, the Council is building momentum for a more informed, more connected movement for immigrant inclusion.

# Building Coalition and Belonging

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State and Local Initiatives, the Center for  
Inclusion and Belonging, Cultural Exchange,  
Content and Consumer Brand Strategy

# STATE AND LOCAL INITIATIVES

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*“While the political debate feels loud and cold, I want to remind people that this isn’t about abstractions. It’s about real people like me, some of my best friends, and my chosen family. It’s about the Harvard graduates, the schoolteachers, the community organizers, and the stay-at-home parents, who were given a fighting chance to learn and give back. The Texas Dream Act wasn’t everything, but it was something — a foundation.”* – [Andrea Ramos](#)

## Scaling Impact in an Era of State-Led Change

The Council’s state and local work builds the capacity of elected officials, advocates, and cross-sector partners to advance inclusive immigration policy across the country. Despite harmful federal policies and rhetoric, states have emerged as pivotal leaders in shaping the immigrant experience — from access to legal services and education to protection from enforcement overreach. Through tailored technical assistance and research, strategic convenings, and trusted policy analysis, the Council continues to equip decisionmakers with the tools and connections they need to meet this moment.

## Convening State Leaders for Learning and Policy Innovation

In June 2025, the Council hosted a joint site visit for members of our Office of New Americans (ONA) State Network in New York and New Jersey — the first in-person convening to span two states. A total of 31 participants from 13 states explored locally implemented programs focused on language access, community engagement, and legal services.

As state government leaders face increasing expectations to coordinate rapid response efforts, support front-line providers and non-profits, and communicate timely policy updates, the Council continues to invest in their capacity to lead. Through the ONA State Network, the Council has built a durable platform for state officials to exchange insights, troubleshoot shared challenges, and scale innovative approaches. The ONA State Network now includes 24 participating red, blue, and purple states and is co-convened in partnership with World Education Services.

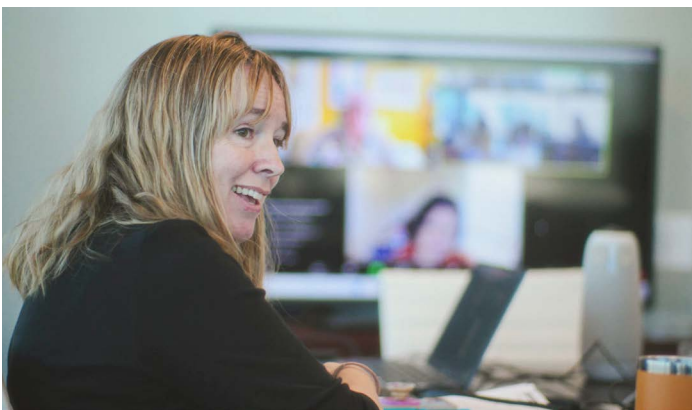
Participant feedback from the site visit will be used to guide technical assistance, future convenings, and policy coordination across the ONA State Network. This effort reflects the Council’s broader commitment to supporting public sector infrastructure for immigrant inclusion, and to ensuring state leaders are positioned to respond thoughtfully and strategically to the needs of their communities.



## Protecting and Advancing Inclusive State Policies

Throughout 2025, the Council has supported partners across the country in navigating an unprecedented volume of immigration-related legislation. Having tracked more than 900 immigration-related bills introduced in state legislatures, the Council provides real-time legal and policy analysis, messaging guidance, and strategic briefings to advocates, public officials, and coalition leaders.

In Texas, the Council played a key role in the response to legislation seeking to repeal the Texas Dream Act, a two-decade-old policy that allowed undocumented students to access in-state tuition. Drawing on years of cross-sector coalition building, trusted relationships, and economic research, the Council helped partners articulate the long-term benefits of maintaining in-state tuition for all — not just for students, but for the state’s workforce and future prosperity. Council data shows that eliminating in-state tuition for undocumented students would lead to a \$461 million annual drop in economic activity, including \$244.4 million in lost wages and \$216.9 million in diminished spending power. The debate over this bill became a defining moment in the 2025 legislative calendar, and the Council’s contributions helped underscore what was at stake in Texas, and nationally.



However, our work continues; the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has since sued Texas over the legality of in-state tuition for undocumented students. In a troubling turn, the Texas Attorney General joined the DOJ in a joint motion

to strike down the policy. A federal court has now issued a permanent injunction against the Texas Dream Act, and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) has intervened on behalf of impacted students. The Council continues to elevate the [legal and human stakes](#) of this repeal and will remain at the forefront as this critical case [moves forward](#).

In addition to defensive fights, the Council has also supported efforts to advance inclusive state legislation — from expanding legal services and language access to protecting sensitive data and recognizing the skills of foreign-trained professionals. Across these efforts, the Council provided technical guidance, facilitated peer learning between states, and helped connect policy design with on-the-ground implementation challenges.

## Equipping Local Leaders with Data and Policy Analysis

As state and local officials face renewed federal scrutiny for their immigration-related policies, the Council has served as a trusted advisor to leaders preparing for public and congressional oversight. In March, the Council worked with key mayors to support their testimony before the House Oversight Committee, which focused on policies that limit local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. The Council provided legal analysis, strategic framing, and public safety data to strengthen the case for local community trust policies. The Council also submitted a [formal statement to the committee](#), affirming the constitutional basis for local discretion and the importance of preserving public trust in immigrant communities.

The blog post, [Protected No More: How States Are Responding to Immigration Enforcement in Sensitive Locations](#), further contextualized the political and operational challenges facing localities under pressure. Together, these efforts ensure that public officials are not navigating scrutiny in isolation but are supported by a robust policy infrastructure and a national community of practice.

# CENTER FOR INCLUSION AND BELONGING

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*“While the national conversation about immigration often centers on tragedy or fear, the reality for most immigrants is far more ordinary.”* – [Adriel Orozco](#)

In a polarized and fragmented civic landscape, the Center for Inclusion and Belonging (CIB) continues to lead transformative work at the intersection of narrative change, social cohesion, and community building. In 2025, the CIB achieved major visibility milestones, deepened long-term field partnerships, and amplified powerful models of local leadership that are advancing belonging across lines of difference. Through nationally recognized campaigns, cross-sector collaborations, and data-informed storytelling, the CIB is modeling what it looks like to create a society where all people — regardless of immigration status, race, or identity — feel that they belong.

## Learning From Bridge Building Success

As part of our mission to foster belonging through evidence-based and community-driven strategies, the CIB has launched a comprehensive evaluation of our Belonging Innovation Lab (BIL) Fellowship and the Inclusion Innovation Collaborative (IIC). These initiatives served as incubators for bridge-building efforts nationwide — providing organizations with grant funding, coaching, and technical assistance to develop powerful models that foster belonging across lines of difference.

Now, with several cohorts completed, we are taking a critical look at the mid-term impacts (1–2 years post-investment) of these early-stage programs. This evaluation process is a key part of our think-and-do tank approach: we learn by doing and iterate based on robust feedback. Conducted in partnership with an independent research firm, this work uncovers the individual skills, organizational conditions, and external factors that contribute to program success and sustainability. The research includes in-depth interviews with alumni from both cohorts, informing detailed learning memos to guide strategic refinements for future programming. We are proud to report an extraordinary 95% participation rate among past cohort members in evaluation interviews and draft report reviews. Additionally, nearly 70% of alumni participated in at least one collaborative sensemaking session to reflect on key findings and surface insights that can guide the field.

This evaluation is not only shaping the next iteration of our fellowship programming but also contributing *Transforming Together*, a storytelling report that models of local bridge-building. This resource will serve as both as a celebration of our partners’ work and as a collection of stories to inspire others committed to creating more inclusive and connected communities.



To further elevate community voices and facilitate collective learning, CIB hosted a special session at the 2025 Welcoming Interactive titled *Rooted in Trust: The Power of Local Leadership to Transform Communities*. This gathering offered a space for several dozen cross-sector leaders to connect, exchange ideas, and invigorate their leadership and community-building practices. This session builds on the learnings of our evaluation, bringing our findings to life with stories directly from bridge builders running programming in their communities.

## Convening Cross-Sector Practitioners of Narrative Change

The CIB deepened its support for narrative practitioners through the continued evolution of our Narrative Community of Practice, first launched in 2023 with the Othering and Belonging Institute and the New Pluralists. This group meets monthly to foster connection, surface insights, and strengthen the field's ability to advance pluralistic narratives amid a rapidly shifting cultural and political landscape. Sessions hosted in 2025 have created space for dozens of practitioners to reflect on emerging trends, including the role of narrative in the 2024 election cycle, and the ongoing reverberations of global conflict — all of which shape how Americans understand who belongs and why.

In June, we brought a core group of collaborators together for the first in-person retreat of the Narrative Community of Practice in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This gathering marked a pivotal step in catalyzing collective momentum and deepening coordination among narrative leaders whose expertise and imagination are urgently needed. Our 11 attendees dedicated time to sensemaking, relationship-building, and the exploration of shared opportunities for impact. The retreat also began to lay the groundwork for potential new initiatives in 2025 and beyond — affirming the community's growing role as both a home for learning and a launchpad for strategic alignment in the narrative field.

## \$100 Million Media Milestone

This year, the CIB's flagship public awareness campaign *Belonging Begins with Us* achieved a defining milestone: \$100 million in donated media placements — a testament to the campaign's resonance with audiences and partners nationwide. In a cultural moment where division is often amplified, this unprecedented investment in belonging messaging demonstrates that stories of welcome, unity, and shared humanity still have broad public appeal.

The campaign, co-led by the Council and the Ad Council in partnership with a wide range of partners, has appeared in high-profile platforms including NFL Network, digital billboards, social media, streaming services, and community venues. With frequent rotation in trusted outlets and culturally relevant formats, the campaign continues to reach millions of people across the political spectrum, modeling the power of storytelling to soften hearts and shift narratives.



This success opens the door for strategic retrospectives and forward-looking campaigns. The team is exploring options for a retrospective blog or an impact interview series with creative partners and campaign participants to document what worked, what shifted, and what's next.

# CULTURAL EXCHANGE

*“Being placed with the Cardiovascular Research Foundation, that was really something we could only dream of and we’re very happy to have this opportunity.”*

– [Former J-1 participants, Phillip and Jennifer](#)

## Heightened Demand for Exchange Opportunities

In the first quarter of 2025, the Council’s Cultural Exchange program saw a 15% increase in J-1 applications compared to the same period in 2024, reflecting both increased demand for global talent and the growing recognition of the Council as a trusted J-1 sponsor. This growth not only expands our program’s reach but also strengthens the revenue that sustains our long-term impact. Every additional application represents another emerging leader gaining hands-on professional experience in the United States — advancing their careers while enriching the organizations and communities they join.

This surge in applications comes as companies across industries continue to look for ways to bring in new perspectives, bridge global knowledge gaps, and strengthen their workforce. Our team stands ready to help them do so, providing high-quality services that streamline the sponsorship process, uphold the integrity of the exchange, and ensure that both visitors and hosts have the tools they need for a successful experience.

## Expanding Our Network Through Strategic Partnerships

We are also investing in new partnerships that expand the reach and visibility of our J-1 program. In early 2025, the Council began developing new strategic partnerships with Aires, a global mobility and relocation services provider, and GlobalAutomotive.com, a network that connects automotive industry professionals and companies around the world. These partnerships create new pathways for introducing the J-1 program to employers who may not have previously considered exchange visitors as part of their talent strategy.

By connecting with companies that already support international mobility through services like relocation and global workforce management, we are positioning the Council as a valuable partner in helping employers meet their talent needs while advancing the goals of cultural exchange. These partnerships not only help us expand the number of applications but also strengthen the program’s long-term sustainability by growing our client base and diversifying the industries we serve.



## SPOTLIGHT

# Strengthening Visibility and Building New Relationships

**T**hroughout 2025, our team has continued to invest in building relationships with key stakeholders across the cultural exchange and global mobility landscape. We participated in several high-impact events aimed at growing our client base, building our network of strategic partners, and reinforcing the Council's leadership in the field. These events included:

- Business + Immigration Quarterly Webinars, which explore the intersection of talent mobility and immigration policy.
- Unshackled: Beyond F-1 & H-1B, a session highlighting alternative pathways for international students and early-career professionals.
- AILA DC Chapter Spring Conference, where we engaged immigration attorneys on best practices for supporting J-1 sponsors and participants.
- NAFSA Leadership Summit on Successful Career Transitions for International Students, a gathering of higher education and workforce leaders focused on the student-to-career pipeline.
- Think-Tank: Economic Allies – Demonstrating the Value of International Students to the American Workforce and Innovation, where we joined partners in highlighting the economic contributions of international talent.
- Our business coalitions in Texas, Ohio, and Colorado continue to host and participate in events that bring state-wide stakeholders and business leaders together to discuss policy priorities, including a roundtable in Colorado with an elected official to discuss agriculture policy and the needs of the business community.
- The newly-launched Global Talent Chamber Network (GTCN) Steering Committee held its inaugural meeting, where chamber of commerce leaders discussed their policy priorities and explored how the Council can better support their efforts.

These events gave us the opportunity to share our expertise, deepen relationships with existing partners, and connect with new audiences who are just beginning to explore the benefits of the J-1 program. By showing up as a thought leader in these spaces, we continue to elevate the visibility of the Council's Cultural Exchange program and position ourselves as a trusted partner in advancing the mission of mutual understanding through international exchange.

# CONTENT AND CONSUMER BRAND STRATEGY

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## Relaunching Our Website to Meet the Moment

In June, we relaunched our website, transforming it into a more accessible, user-friendly platform that better serves the diverse communities who rely on us. Following the merger of the Council and New American Economy in 2022, we recognized the need for a unified online home that brings together all our policy, legal, narrative, and educational resources in one place.

The new site offers clearer pathways for visitors to learn about our work, engage with our research, access legal resources, and find ways to get involved. It also strengthens our ability to serve both expert and non-expert audiences, ensuring that policymakers, attorneys, journalists, educators, and everyday readers can all find what they need — whether they are seeking a legal explainer on asylum, finding practice advisories, or following a primary source personal story about belonging.

By improving navigation, search functionality, and content presentation, we are positioning the website as a true front door to the Council's work. This investment will help us reach more people, deepen engagement, and amplify our mission across digital platforms for years to come.

## Bringing Our Story to Life Through Video

In addition to transforming our digital presence, we also launched our first-ever brand video, a new tool to help people understand not just what we do, but why we do it. For the first time, we are telling our story through the voices of our staff, partners, and community members — capturing the passion, expertise, and vision that drive our work every day.

This video gives us a powerful new way to introduce the Council to supporters, partners, and the general public. Whether shared in a donor meeting, played at an event, or featured online, the video helps people connect emotionally with our mission and understand the human impact behind our policy analysis, legal advocacy, and public education.



Together, the website relaunch and the new brand video mark a milestone in how we communicate who we are. These efforts reflect our commitment to making the Council's work more visible, accessible, and resonant — so that more people can join us in building a fairer, more welcoming, and more inclusive America.