

Dear Members of the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee:

On behalf of Rose Community Foundation, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 24-1280 and respectfully encourage members of the committee to vote in favor.

As a community foundation representing and investing in the seven-county Greater Denver region, we work closely with a wide range of nonprofits that are on the ground serving individuals and communities furthest from opportunity. In December 2022, as migrants first began arriving in Denver, Rose Community Foundation partnered with the City and County of Denver and the State of Colorado – along with The Denver Foundation, Latino Community Foundation of Colorado, and Mile High United Way – to create the Newcomers Fund, our state’s centralized philanthropic response to this historic influx of new immigrants.

The Newcomers Fund has been a tremendous model of public-philanthropic partnership during a time of humanitarian crisis. Over the past 15 months, the Fund has been an important tool for pooling resources and quickly and strategically deploying grants to dozens of incredible and tireless nonprofits that are helping migrants find temporary shelter and permanent housing or addressing other basic needs like food and health care, as well as those assisting with applications for temporary protected status and work permits.

Over this time, we have been moved by the remarkable generosity of people across our state. The Fund has raised more than \$2.8 million with more than 5,000 donations from individuals, foundations and businesses, and people across Colorado continue to give what they can to support their new neighbors.

However, the philanthropic sector and generous Coloradans cannot come close to addressing the massive and growing need for resources. Our state’s nonprofit ecosystem does not currently have the staff or financial capacity to welcome, orient, and financially support individuals and families who are awaiting their immigration proceedings or work permit authorization. There is an urgent need to invest in and build the capacity of Colorado’s migrant-serving community-based organizations.

We are also increasingly seeing these needs expand beyond the Denver Metro area, with many migrants who came through Denver now located across the state. Local governments and nonprofits in mountain towns and rural Colorado are scrambling to respond to this new and evolving issue, but they lack necessary infrastructure or resources to shelter newcomers and help with other basic needs.

This legislation represents a critical step in our state’s evolving response to this crisis. The Migrant Support Network created by this bill will not only get desperately needed dollars in the hands of nonprofits serving this population, it will also help advance a coordinated statewide response to what is increasingly a statewide issue. With most new immigrants barred from federally funded assistance programs, the City of Denver’s and other municipalities’ budgets stretched thin, and the reality of philanthropy’s limited resources, this state-funded program would be a critical boon to supporting the health, safety and self-sufficiency of those who want to call Colorado home.

Rose Community Foundation proudly joins our partners in the nonprofit sector, as well as our partners at the State of Colorado, who support this important bill to assist new arrivals to our state.

Sarah Kurz
Chief Impact Officer, Rose Community Foundation