



# DERAILED

**Rising Attacks and  
Retreating Resources  
for Racial Justice**

**FIVE YEARS  
AFTER *MISMATCHED* —  
WHERE PHILANTHROPY  
STANDS NOW**

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**FALL 2025**



# SIDEBAR

## Views from the Field: A Crossroads for Latinx Movements

By Kenia Morales and Becca Guerra-Molo

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*This sidebar is based on research conducted for the recently released report, [Frontlines of Democracy: Mapping Latino Civic Power in the United States](#), based on extensive interviews with hundreds of Latinx movement leaders.*

**During the Covid-19 pandemic, many in the Latinx community were applauded as “essential workers” who kept the country’s hospitals, grocery stores, and transportation systems running during a time of crisis. Yet today, our families are confronted by a justice system that day after day refuses to uphold even such basic constitutional protections as due process.** As the largest ethnic minority in the U.S., we are not merely integral to a thriving democracy — we are its backbone.

Across the country, Latinx leaders and grassroots organizations are stepping up, taking President Trump to court, conducting “Know Your Rights” trainings in their cities and neighborhoods, and organizing mutual aid networks to address urgent needs. They are on the front lines in this new era, responding to a surge in demand for direct services while building rapid response infrastructure in the face of politically and racially motivated arrests, detentions, deportations, and violence.

In the summer of 2025, we conducted nearly 200 interviews with Latinx leaders from all 50 states. A resounding theme emerged: ***We are scared, but we are resilient.***

Leaders described living with active and ongoing trauma, even as they continue to organize in their communities to defend democracy and to protect families from being detained or disappeared. Instead of backing down, they are building stronger coalitions, deepening solidarity, and making their voices heard at every level — from local school boards to the halls of Congress.

As the ground shifts beneath them, Latinx leaders are also confronting persistent uncertainties regarding voting trends and political alignment. The threat we face is grave. Today, every element of the political efficacy cycle, from civic engagement to institutional trust, is fragile. And, in many places, it is unraveling.

How funders respond in this moment matters deeply. Unfortunately, the paralysis and sluggishness of much of the philanthropic sector compound the harm at a time when urgent action is needed. Yet there is still an opportunity to course-correct. Funders can choose to become true co-conspirators in the fight to defend democracy and protect Latinx communities, but only if they act with the urgency, courage, and solidarity this moment demands.

### **Impact on Organizations**

As Latinx organizations navigate the second Trump administration, the threats are not only external. Withdrawal of funding, shifts in philanthropic priorities, rollbacks in diversity and equity commitments, and the collapse of long-term infrastructure are destabilizing the very organizations that have historically supported Latinx civic engagement and social change.

**Across the country, we are experiencing a dual reality: inspiring local leadership is rising to meet the moment as political and institutional retrenchment is threatening hard-won progress.** In Georgia, at least three Latinx-led organizations are reducing staff despite rising community needs. In Tennessee, a student success organization altered its mission statement: it replaced its Spanish name with an English one and removed all references to its Latinx focus to remain active on college campuses and continue serving students amid escalating anti-Latinx hostility. In California’s Central Valley, one organization scrubbed its website of any



COURTESY OF VOCES DE LA FRONTERA — PHOTO BY JESSICA SCHMIDT

reference to “diversity, equity, and inclusion” and removed staff information, a strategic retreat aimed at preserving its ability to deliver rapid-response services and mutual aid without becoming a political target.

## A Crossroads Moment

Several critical themes emerged from our research. Most notable are the widening gaps left by corporate and federal funders and the urgent need for diversified, values-aligned funding strategies.

Corporate funders are not immune to the federal threats. Many longtime partners have pulled back, with some national Latinx organizations reporting that corporations once proud to support their work are now “spooked” by the current political climate. While aware of these tensions, Latinx/Hispanic grantees in New Mexico that are suddenly “too ethnic” struggle to feel empathy as their communities not only endure economic hardship, but also suffer under the looming threat of physical violence.

Across the country, organizations characterized the sudden withdrawal of state and federal funding as a political ploy by the far right with devastating consequences for communities. **“If federal funding stops, we won’t have a program,”** warned an

organizational leader in New Hampshire. But another, in Oklahoma, saw an opportunity for strengthening organizational sustainability: “In the next five years, I want to be less than 30 percent reliant on state and federal funding. I want to have a solid database of funders.”

The data confirm what movement leaders have been warning for years: Latinx civic infrastructure cannot thrive on short-term grants, corporate goodwill, and unpredictable federal programs. The path forward requires bold investment in long-term sustainability, diversified revenue streams, and committed, values-aligned funders who understand the stakes not just for Latinx communities, but for the future of democracy.

## Grantmakers’ Response is Not Sufficient

A few funders are stepping up in response to these unprecedented challenges; the vast majority are falling short. From paralysis to total shutdown, funders are not meeting this moment for grantees, leaving frontline organizations across the country to face growing threats with shrinking resources.

In states like Washington, some funders have halted their funding as a result of executive orders; they

are unsure how to proceed and are advised by legal teams to hold back. This caution and stop-and-go behavior has real consequences for grantees. In Utah, one leader shared, **“It’s heartbreaking when we have a grant for one year, build a great program, and then have to shut it down.”** In California, organizations are witnessing a growing number of funders choosing to sunset or significantly scale back their giving in response to the political chaos. In a similar sentiment, Colorado leaders have asked: *Who will fill the gap? And how will our infrastructure survive the long-term impact of this retreat?*

Navigating philanthropy’s response in this moment can feel like a zero-sum game, with devastating, yet preventable, consequences. For funders, this is a critical moment to reflect on and recommit to support for Latinx-led organizations. For those organizations, it’s also an inflection point — one that invites exploration of new, more sustainable avenues of funding that go beyond traditional philanthropic models.

## Blueprint for Philanthropy — What Latinx Leaders Need

In this moment of uncertainty and fear, politically, socially, and financially, Latinx movement leaders are calling for more than just short-term funding models. They are demanding trust, partnership, and long-term commitment. The needs are clear and urgent:

- **Trust and Respect for Local Expertise.** Philanthropy must trust Latinx organizations to lead during this critical moment. These leaders bring experience, expertise, and deep, long-standing relationships with their communities, assets that must be honored and valued.
- **Fund Rapid Response.** In the short term, Latinx movement organizations need support for their crisis-response work, including legal services, mutual aid, Know Your Rights canvassing and training, safety and security measures, and other work to protect community members from being detained, deported, or disappeared. Dedicated resources for rapid-response efforts generate benefits beyond immediate crisis intervention. When they serve as first responders, organizations

establish new bonds of trust with community members and expand their own awareness of community needs.

- **Invest in Research.** Latinx identity is complex and diverse. Many Latinx folks embrace multiple identities — among them Hispanic or Latinx, American, Afro-Latinx, and Afro-Caribbean — that reflect their varied origins, nationalities, and cultural and racial backgrounds. Funders have an important opportunity to support more nuanced, disaggregated data collection as well as storytelling rooted in Latinx communities.
- **Plan for the Gaps, and Fill Them.** Philanthropy should be planning for known upcoming gaps (sunsets and spenddowns) by developing alternatives for those funding sources. Since they’re often the first to know, philanthropic institutions are uniquely positioned to help grantees navigate these shifts.
- **Support a Broader Civic Engagement Strategy.** Latinx communities remain one of the most under-engaged voting blocs, and funders have a critical opportunity to engage and mobilize Latinx communities. Voter registration and engagement are vital, especially in states where the Latinx population is often overlooked, such as Alabama, Idaho, Iowa, and Kansas. Accurate counting in the 2030 U.S. Census also has enormous implications for political representation, redistricting, and allocation of financial resources at the state and local levels. However, there is widespread concern that the Census could be weaponized against Latinx communities, making robust support and advocacy all the more urgent.



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