

# UNLOCKING THE POWER OF IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Thriving communities of first and second generation immigrants exist across the country, building robust networks of mutual support and honoring their shared cultures. Although some of these residents may be ineligible to vote, their American-born and or naturalized family members do indeed have the right. Yet, voter participation gaps suggest voters from immigrant communities are turning out to vote at rates lower than their non-immigrant counterparts.

## 23.2 MILLION

### Estimated Eligible Immigrant Voters as of 2020

According to Pew data, there are nearly **45 million foreign born (or first-generation) immigrants in the United States**. Of this group, nearly half are naturalized citizens, and another 27% are lawful permanent residents who may pursue citizenship through naturalization, after meeting certain requirements. Voter eligibility of immigrants in the U.S has grown from 12% in 2000 to 23% in 2020. One in ten eligible voters today is an immigrant, and their U.S. born children and families make these communities an even bigger segment of the electorate. As these communities grow, so should their representation, but many barriers prevent these voters from participating fully in our democracy.

### US born voters have a higher turnout rate than foreign born voters



\* data based on 2016 presidential election (source: Pew Research Center)

Nonprofits have a critical advantage to improve voter turnout among the immigrant communities they serve. Relying on trust, respect, and shared languages and beliefs, staff at organizations can change attitudes about voting and help their community see the importance and benefits of voting. We asked several organizations that serve immigrant communities about the barriers the voters they serve face and how their organization has overcome them.











