

# How the *Fellowship for a New California* Contributed to the Passage of the California Driver License Law

## Rockwood Leadership Institute's Cohort-Based Programs: 2016 Third Party Evaluation

### Overview

In 2016, Rockwood Leadership Institute engaged Learning for Action (LFA) to conduct an independent evaluation of Rockwood's cohort-based leadership programs, including contributions to individual and movement-level outcomes.

This case study is one of several evaluation reports produced and illustrates how Rockwood's fellowships contribute to movement-level change. Based on interviews with four fellows and one trainer, the study highlights how participation in the *Fellowship for a New California* contributed to the 2013 passage of the California Driver License Law (AB 60). AB 60 provides undocumented immigrants in California with access to driver licenses.

### The Fellowship for a New California

Since 2011, the *Fellowship for a New California (F4NC)* has brought together over 90 of California's immigrant rights leaders for an intensive, 10-month leadership development program. Four cohorts of leaders have completed the fellowship, and continue to convene to stay in touch with peers, connect with other cohorts, and continue conversations on challenges and opportunities in the movement.

The F4NC was developed in partnership with the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, and supported through funding from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, and the Weingart Foundation.

### Summary of Key Findings

The Rockwood fellowship experience contributed to enhanced collaboration among immigrant rights advocates working to advance AB 60. Advocates communicated with each other more regularly and were able to have more productive discussions to understand differences and strategize about the bill in a more coordinated way. Specifically, the F4NC contributed to the efforts to pass and implement AB 60 in the following ways:

- 1. Bringing leaders together.** There already existed coalitions of organizations working on the immigrant rights agenda in California. Fellows shared that the safety of the space provided by the F4NC and the context of being together with shared goals helped them to better understand each other's stance on the issues, priorities, and perspectives.
- 2. Improving communication.** Immigrant rights advocates with differing strategies have struggled to communicate and collaborate effectively, which has made advancing policy efforts challenging. The tools F4NC alums gained to have courageous conversations\* contributed to improved communications throughout the development and implementation of AB 60.
- 3. Strengthening relationships and building trust.** Throughout F4NC sessions, fellows got to know each other on a personal level and developed connections and relationships in a safe and confidential space. These new and strengthened relationships, paired with tools such as courageous conversations, encouraged trust among fellows to grow.
- 4. Encouraging collaboration, despite differences.** Personal connections and trust among fellows contributed to more effective working relationships and enhanced fellows' ability to collaborate across difference in order to advance shared movement goals.

### The Takeaway

This case study demonstrates that investing in leadership development through cohort-based fellowships can and does contribute to movement-level wins. Rockwood's tools are a blend of movement-agnostic frameworks. By bringing leaders together to learn and apply those tools in a issue-focused space, Rockwood creates a unique opportunity for movement leaders to come together around a shared vision.

\*Courageous conversations involve engaging in authentic and clear communication in situations that might otherwise bring up feelings of emotion for people.