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Greater Boston Immigrant Defense Fund: A new partnership for immigrant rights

Boston (September 13, 2017) – The Hyams Foundation announced today its participation as a lead partner in the Greater Boston Immigrant Defense Fund, a new public-private collaboration aimed at expanding legal services and protection for the city’s immigrant and refugee communities.

The Fund will provide approximately \$1.4 million in funding for local organizations and create a network designed to streamline and coordinate support services for these communities. Other lead partners include the Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Advancement, Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, the Barr and Boston Foundations, the Fish Family Foundation, the Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation, the Klarman Family Foundation, and corporate funders, Foley Hoag and Mintz Levin, among others.

“Last week, the Trump Administration threw the lives of 800,000 young people into turmoil and uncertainty with the stroke of a pen,” said Dr. Jocelyn Sargent, Executive Director of the Hyams Foundation. “In an era of volatile federal politics and a growing nationalist movement, it is our collective and moral responsibility to ensure that Boston continues to serve as a sanctuary for all. More than 22% of Greater Boston’s 800,000 immigrants and refugees do not have immigration status. This initiative will allow us—as philanthropists, government, and nonprofits—to stand in solidarity against the discrimination, hostility and painful uncertainty experienced every day by our fellow Bostonians.”

The initiative Fund will award two-year grants to up to 10 local organizations that provide legal screenings and consultations, representation and defense for those facing deportation, and community education and outreach to targeted communities. At the same time, the Fund’s participants will build a network and structure to allow partners to share information and collect and analyze data.

“So many of us—from business leaders to educators and community groups—have taken actions and taken to the streets to denounce hatred and injustice,” said Sargent. “The Fund brings us one step closer to defining how we can take our actions and collectively work towards ensuring fairness and justice for all Bostonians.”

Founded in 1921, the Hyams Foundation is a private, independent foundation dedicated to achieving economic, racial and social justice in Boston and Chelsea Massachusetts. For more information, visit

www.hyamsfoundation.org

For more information on grant application criteria and how to apply, contact Janne Hellgren (jhellgren@mlac.org).