

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** FIRM Member Organizations  
**FROM:** FIRM / CCC Staff  
**RE:** FIRM Structure Proposal  
**DATE:** July 13-14, 2011 – FIRM Member Meeting

---

This FIRM structure proposal was developed by FIRM Staff, with consultation from the FIRM Executive Committee. The purpose of this memo is to outline a structure for FIRM that will provide maximum participation of FIRM membership, while also outlining a clear decision-making process that will allow FIRM to move forward as an accountable and effective network of organizations.

This memo proposes 3-tiers of involvement in FIRM, describes the roles and responsibilities of each tier, and clarifies decision-making procedures.

### **FIRM Supporters (organizations and individuals)**

---

FIRM supporters are the broad base of organizations and individuals who share FIRM's values and vision. FIRM Supporters may take action as part of FIRM's e-advocacy work, or they may turn out for actions organized by FIRM Member Organizations or occasionally plan their own actions in local areas not covered by FIRM Members.

#### ***Role of FIRM Supporters:***

- ✓ Participate in, and contribute to the growth of, FIRM's online advocacy activities.
- ✓ Participate in local and national legislative and media actions; i.e. congressional visits and calls, petition drives, letters to the editor and op-eds, etc.
- ✓ Participate in story collection projects.
- ✓ Participate in local, regional, national mobilizations, forums and events.

#### ***Responsibilities of FIRM Supporters:***

- ✓ Sign the **FIRM Supporter Form**
- ✓ Recruit additional individuals and organizations to endorse FIRM
- ✓ Supporters are not authorized to present themselves as representing FIRM

#### ***Role of CCC / FIRM Staff in Supporting the FIRM Supporters:***

- ✓ CCC / FIRM Organizers and Communications staff cultivate the engagement and growth of FIRM's supporter base and connect supporters to Member Organizations, where possible.

## **FIRM Member Organizations**

---

FIRM Member Organizations **form the core of FIRM**. Member Organizations carry out FIRM's strategic plans and actions, and advance FIRM's goals in their home state and through coordinated national efforts.

### ***Role of the Member Organizations:***

- ✓ Support FIRM's mission and vision by: contributing to strategy development; setting measurable goals for advancing FIRM's strategy, and; bringing organizational resources to bear in carrying out FIRM's strategic plans and participating fully in campaign activities.
- ✓ Membership in FIRM is organizationally based, and it requires sign-on to the **FIRM Membership Form**.
- ✓ Provide FIRM with information on the needs of local communities.
- ✓ Participate in FIRM activities and events

### ***Responsibilities of Member Organizations:***

- ✓ Discuss, review and adopt strategy recommendations made by the Executive Committee.  
**Note:** a consensus model of decision-making is presumed; however very difficult / contentious decisions may call for a majority vote (50 + 1) in order to move forward.
- ✓ Align organizational plans and campaigns with FIRM activities and messaging, whenever appropriate and possible.
- ✓ Participate fully in monthly conference calls and meet in person at the annual FIRM Summit.
- ✓ Nominate and vote for the Executive Committee at the yearly Summit.
- ✓ Participate in ad hoc committees as needed; such as the Policy Task Force, Direct Action Committee, Communications and Story Committee, and Learning Circles.
- ✓ Respond in a timely manner to CCC / FIRM Organizers and Executive Committee members.
- ✓ Approve changes to FIRM structure, as needed and proposed by the Executive Committee.
- ✓ To grow FIRM's national membership, Member Organizations work with CCC / FIRM Staff and Executive Committee members to actively seek out, recruit and provide capacity-building support to new / emerging organizations, particularly in states where FIRM is not represented.

### ***Who:***

- ✓ FIRM aspires to have a national membership, with at least one FIRM Member Organization advocating and organizing for justice for immigrants in each state.
- ✓ All FIRM member organizations should assign one contact person (0.25 FTE) to work with CCC / FIRM staff.

### ***Role of CCC / FIRM Staff in Supporting the Member Organizations:***

- ✓ Mayron Payes coordinates monthly FIRM calls and general communication to FIRM Member Organizations.
- ✓ FIRM Member Organizations work primarily with a designated CCC / FIRM Organizer who provides organizational development coaching, organizing support, and up-to-date information about national immigrant-related policy and political initiatives.
- ✓ CCC / FIRM Staff actively seek out opportunities to invite Member Organizations to participate in presentations, meetings with national funders, and trainings.

## **FIRM Executive Committee**

---

FIRM's Executive Committee consists of Executive Directors of FIRM Member Organizations who have the organizational capacity and depth of experience to devote additional leadership and time to guiding and coordinating FIRM's activities and strategy. A high-degree of involvement and coordination by Executive Committee members is needed to ensure that FIRM is able to be nimble, responsive, and effective in a fast-moving, national political environment.

### ***Role of the Executive Committee:***

- ✓ Provide leadership in strategizing to advance FIRM's mission and goals by working with CCC/FIRM staff to develop compelling and creative strategic plans for FIRM, as well as ensuring a participatory process whereby FIRM Member Organizations can collaboratively contribute to strategy development and setting measurable goals for advancing FIRM's strategy.
- ✓ Ensure that FIRM Member Organizations have meaningful opportunities for input, feedback and participation on major strategic decisions that may arise, particularly through monthly FIRM membership calls.
- ✓ Represent FIRM in key national and regional meetings, actions, and campaigns.
- ✓ Represent FIRM with key national funders and commit to fundraising collaboratively.
- ✓ Represent FIRM with key national decision makers including Congress and the Administration.
- ✓ Two members of the Executive Committee will be **selected by the EC** to join CCC's Executive Director and the FIRM Campaign Coordinator as **National Spokespeople for FIRM**, for staggered 12-month terms.

### ***Responsibilities of Executive Committee Members:***

- ✓ Participate fully in weekly conference calls
- ✓ Attend in-person Executive Committee meetings every three to four months, and cover a portion of own travel expenses.
- ✓ Drive state or regional FIRM action through EC members' own organizational and leadership structures.
- ✓ Commit at least 0.5 FTE to FIRM Activities; this time commitment may be spread between the Executive Director and other Lead Staff.

### ***Who:***

- ✓ The Executive Committee will consist of a total of **12-20 Executive Directors** of FIRM Member Organizations, **elected by the FIRM Member Organizations at the annual FIRM Summit (see note below)**.
- ✓ While the responsibilities of Executive Committee Members may limit the opportunity for FIRM Member Organizations with less organizational capacity to step into this leadership role, two seats on the Executive Committee will encourage two Executive Directors from smaller or newer FIRM Member Organizations with less capacity to serve on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will extend to such organizations an appropriate degree of latitude in meeting the responsibilities of Executive Committee membership, in light of their lesser capacity.
- ✓ An Executive Director may delegate his/her power to a representative of his/her organization as long as such representative is empowered to make decisions.

***Role of CCC / FIRM Staff in Supporting the Executive Committee:***

- ✓ Marissa Graciosa and Mayron Payes and other CCC staff will coordinate the Executive Committee, as needed.
- ✓ CCC / FIRM Staff will record and monitor attendance of Executive Committee members on calls and at meetings; to review attendance with the National Spokespeople twice a year, in order to ensure full participation and accountability of Executive Committee members.

***Executive Committee Election Process:***

The intention behind this proposal is to ensure a democratic and transparent election process that facilitates participation by a broad and diverse cross-section of leaders in FIRM. The Executive Committee can be as large as 20 Executive Directors of FIRM Member Organizations (larger than the current 15). The proposed size balances the need for a group that is not so large as to make conversations unwieldy, while at the same time ensuring that key discussions are held by a group that is broadly representative of the whole. Service on the EC is dependent on the capacity and willingness of FIRM Member Organizations to take on the extensive responsibilities of serving on the Executive Committee.

- ✓ A portion of the agenda of the FIRM Summit will be reserved for electing the Executive Committee on a biennial basis. FIRM Member Organizations will be notified in advance of the upcoming election, and election process.
- ✓ The FIRM Executive Committee will be elected to serve for two-year terms.
- ✓ FIRM Member Organizations will be asked to nominate colleague organizations to serve on the Executive Committee.
- ✓ Executive Directors of nominated organizations will make brief remarks addressing the Summit to accept (or decline) the nomination, describe the contributions their organization has made (and can make) in a leadership position in the movement, and to affirm their commitment to meet the Responsibilities of Executive Committee members (outlined above).
- ✓ The voting process will depend on the number of nominations:
  - **By Voice Vote** if there are **20 or FEWER** organizations nominated: A voice vote will be called for each nomination. Any FIRM Member Organization may call for an exact count on a nominated organization; at which point nominated organization must receive the affirmative votes of 50% + 1 of FIRM members present at the Summit.
  - **By Secret Ballot** if there are **MORE than 20** organizations nominated: Each FIRM Member Organization present at the Summit will only receive 20 ballots to spread across the ballot boxes of nominated organizations. Organizations may vote or abstain from voting for any organization but can only cast one ballot for any individual nominee. Ballots will be tallied and nominated organizations will be ranked based on the number of votes they receive. Once the organizations have been ranked, the top 20 ranked organizations will constitute the Executive Committee.