

**prairielands**  
freedom fund



# THE PAST FOUR YEARS

Prairielands Freedom Fund's Work

2017 - 2020



We, like many others across the country and the world, are relieved to see the last administration come to an ignominious end. However, we know that the immense cruelties of the immigration detention and pretrial incarceration systems did not begin with Trump, and will not end with Biden.

While we look back with great pride on the work we have done over the last four years, we are also looking forward: to a world where no person is caged; to a world where everyone has the resources they need to thrive; to a world that respects the dignity and integrity of all people and communities.

Join us as we keep working to make that world a reality.

In Hope and Solidarity,

**The PFF Team**



## OUR MISSION

We pay immigration bond and pretrial bail to free people from detention. We reject the assumption that imprisonment is necessary or inevitable, affirm the dignity and agency of imprisoned people, and minimize the harm imprisonment inflicts on families and communities. We are committed to acting in solidarity with all movements working to abolish the imprisonment of our fellow human beings.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

We recognize the inherent dignity of all people, and believe that everyone has the right to seek a life of peace and safety.

We respect all people's right to make choices about their lives free from the harm and coercion caused by imprisonment.

In the face of systems that dehumanize, divide, and confuse, we choose to love and trust each other.

We strive to uplift the voices and prioritize the participation of members of communities unduly impacted by detention, to ensure that we are not recreating systemic structures of oppression within our work.

# OUR STORY



As a small, all-volunteer team based primarily in Iowa City, we are deeply proud of what we have been able to accomplish over the last four years. We are grateful to the many community partners, allies, volunteers, and donors who made it possible.

**NOVEMBER 2016**

Founded as the Eastern Iowa Community Bond Project. Our founders were three volunteers with diverse backgrounds, brought together by community meetings of immigration advocates responding to the 2016 presidential election

**MAY 2018**

Mt. Pleasant workplace raid. We paid 16 bonds for people detained, helping to ensure that no one remained in detention because they couldn't pay bond

**JUNE 2019**

Freedom for Fifty! On June 26, 2019, we paid our 50th immigration bond, for a father of three who had lived in the United States since he was 7 years old

**JUNE 2020**

In support of the uprising against police violence and due to the urgent need for bail support, we began paying pretrial bail for protesters

**NOVEMBER 2020**

Acknowledging our growth and formalizing our ongoing commitment to expand bond support, we officially became Prairielands Freedom Fund

# OUR WORK



70

## IMMIGRATION BONDS PAID

Average bond amount = \$6,000

Immigration bond amounts ranged from \$2500 - \$30,000

On average, the immigration bonds we pay amount to nearly 1/3 of the detained person or family's annual income

122

## PROTEST BONDS PAID

Protest bond amounts ranged from \$300 - \$25,000

## TOTAL FUNDS PAID

2017 - 2020

2017: \$17,000

2020: \$352,700

**\$689,200**

2018: \$144,000

2019: \$175,000

# STORIES

---

## OF BOND SUPPORT

The work of bail and bond funds across the country is a testament to our shared commitment to abolishing immigration detention, money bail, and all forms of incarceration. As we work to #FreeThemAll, we honor the resilience and strength of the individuals, families, and communities impacted by state violence.

My attorney was my only visitor. My wife emailed him a picture of her and the boy and he printed it and brought it to me. "Look, they sent you this." Imagine, I started crying with joy and... because **it had been almost seven months that I hadn't seen her**, not in photos or anything. And he showed it to me after seven months in detention, and the tears started to fall.

**Seeing them [when I got out] was a beautiful thing. Something that only God and I know, to tell the truth.** I felt so happy, very excited. All the sadness left me, I could even eat. I felt like the happiest man in the world, thanks to God and all these beautiful people who helped.

God bless [PFF], always. **Can you imagine? They achieve goals that are so incredible--they reunite couples, children and their parents see each other again. Wonderful, extraordinary things.**

- Rafael, released after 8 months in detention

.....

The day he got out I was a bunch of nerves... he was out when my friend arrived and when I opened the door, I don't know how I turned into butter and I melted. **I could only hug him and feel his warmth again.**

I don't know, it was like... **if you run out of air, you can't breathe. And suddenly someone put on an oxygen mask... That day I think I was born again.**

- Karina, wife of detainee, translation

[Our kids] just wanted their dad. That's all they wanted. They would constantly ask "Mommy, is he coming home? Mommy, is he coming home? **What if he doesn't come home? What are we going to do?"** ...

And I made my mind up that if he were to be deported that we would move to Mexico. I would sell everything. You know, **I'm not leaving my kids without their Dad. I'm not. I can't.**

What do I do? I sold rims, I worked, I called people that owed money.... I was penny pinching like crazy... I was ready to sell my car. I was trying to sell my truck. I was selling what I could. I had to sell it. You know, anything, anything, just to make sure that their dad would be back with them. I tell him all right, you know what mom, I may need to sell a house. We will just move in with you. you're getting down to nitty gritty like, what do you sell?

[When PFF paid her husband's bond]: Right away. Right away. That was awesome. That was a big relief... like a weight lifted off my shoulders.

I just want to say thank you to the Bond Project. They don't know how much they actually do help. **Yeah, it's just money. But to me it was my husband. They helped bring him home.** I will be forever grateful with them.

- Martina, wife of detainee

# HIGHLIGHTS



## MT. PLEASANT FREE THEM ALL CAMPAIGN

After the workplace raid in Mt. Pleasant in May 2018, we launched the Free Them All campaign with the goal of getting everyone detained in the raid out of detention.

We paid 16 bonds within approximately six weeks, and ensured that nobody remained in immigration detention due to inability to pay.



## NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND ACTIONS

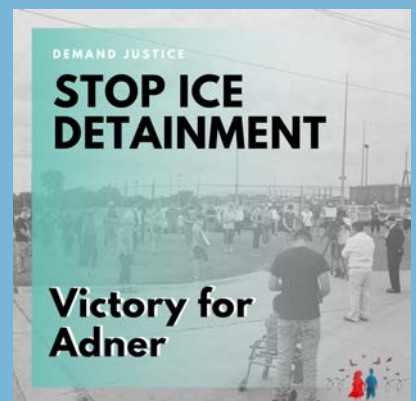
In cooperation with our partners in the National Bail Fund Network, we have participated in a variety of nationwide actions against immigration detention. In 2019, we were proud to participate in the first annual Fall Freedom Day, where organizers from a dozen community bond funds posted \$2.1 million in immigration bonds at ten different ICE offices to secure freedom for approximately 200 people.

We have paid multiple bonds for people detained outside of Iowa, many of whom were coming to Iowa to rejoin family.

## ACCOMPANIMENT

In July 2020, we partnered with the Iowa City Catholic Worker House to accompany Adner to a mandatory ICE check-in. At this point Adner had already been detained three times by ICE, and had to post three separate immigration bonds to remain free—two of which PFF was able to pay on his behalf.

The accompaniment had a turnout of over 50 supporters demanding for Adner to be allowed to return to his family that day, and after a 90-minute standoff with ICE officials, Adner's check-in was cancelled and he was permitted to return to his family without ever having entered the DHS office.



## PROTEST BAIL SUPPORT

During the summer of 2020, we built partnerships with Iowa Freedom Riders, the Des Moines Mutual Aid Bail Fund, and Des Moines Black Liberation Movement to provide bail support to protesters.

Together we provided bail support for every protester who requested aid and was bailable, ensuring that no protester remained behind bars because of inability to pay and no protester was burdened by the many costs--financial and otherwise--of posting their own bail.

# OUR WORK — CONTINUES



The work of community bond funds is not simply to continually pay bonds while the violence of incarceration continues unabated. Rather, our work is to pay bonds and get people free while we work toward the complete abolition of immigration detention and pretrial incarceration.

## OUR FIGHT IS NOT OVER HERE'S WHAT WE'RE DOING NEXT

Keep paying immigration bonds across the Prairielands states using improved and expanded eligibility criteria

Provide ongoing support to protesters throughout Iowa and expand to provide general pretrial support beginning in Eastern Iowa

Work with local organizing partners throughout the state to develop organizing capacity and campaigns against immigration detention and pretrial bail



Your support helps us realize a world  
where we can all be free.

Thank you.

To donate, volunteer, or get more information  
about our work, please contact us or visit  
[prairielandsfreedomfund.org](http://prairielandsfreedomfund.org)



P.O. Box 3174

Iowa City, IA 52244-3174

(319) 535-2209

[team@prairielandsfreedomfund.org](mailto:team@prairielandsfreedomfund.org)

[www.prairielandsfreedomfund.org](http://www.prairielandsfreedomfund.org)