



Dear Wenatchee for Immigrant Justice supporters:

As the heat and summer harvest season is upon us, WIJ has been hard at work behind the scenes. We are so grateful for your continued support, and we want to share an update about our ongoing work in the community and some exciting changes for WIJ this fall.

Working Towards Non-Profit Status

We are incredibly grateful for the work of two of our volunteer Coordinators, Marichuy Alvizar and Rachael Pashkowski, for leading WIJ in the process of becoming an official 501(c)3 organization. This change will allow us to be even more responsive to the community as we create a sustainable organizational structure grounded in our values.

Growing WIJ Leadership

WIJ Coordinators are now supported by the guidance of a board of trustees who have lived experience as immigrants or experience working in solidarity with immigrant communities. We are excited to welcome Arlette Lopez-Rodriguez with Cafe and the Rural People’s Voice, Monica Valle with Hand in Hand Immigration Services and Team Naturaleza, Dane Breslin with the Northwest Intermountain Synod of the ELCA, and Mary Katherine Deen, long time WIJ Coordinator and our liaison with Sunnyslope Church, the original fiscal sponsor for WIJ. In addition to the board, WIJ is excited to welcome new volunteer



coordinators – Lupe Peregrino and Jess Ingman. Lupe brings great community outreach experience with Madrinas de Salud and she recently accompanied Irene Morrow to the Group Health grantee event in July. Jess works with Faith Action Network has brought a fresh look to the WIJ logos and will be working with Lupe to foster WIJ’s volunteer base.

Washington Covid-19 Immigrant Relief Fund (WIRF)

This summer WIJ became a subgrantee of WAISN in order to provide local outreach for WIRF funds that will be available September 19. WIRF was created by and for immigrants in order to support Washington residents who are impacted by Covid-19 but not eligible for federal stimulus or unemployment due to their immigration status. Marichuy Alvizar is leading these efforts as our WIRF Coordinator and through this grant WIJ is excited to hire Ofelia Alvizar who will now manage the WIJ service line and Lourdes Medina who will lead WIRF outreach. Since the 501(c)3 process is not yet finalized, we are incredibly grateful to Sunnyslope Church who has agreed to continue serving as our fiscal sponsor for this particular grant even after our 501(c)3 application is complete.

\$38,000 – 63 Families

Rent
Food
Utilities
Medical bills
Medication
Durable Medical Equipment
DACA Applications
Legal Permanent Resident Renewals
Naturalization Petition Fees
Work Authorization Renewals
Asylum Petition
Immigration Physical
Expert Witness
Transportation to BCIS offices
U-Visa Petitions for Crime Victims

WIJ Service Line and Help for Families

As we found during the heart of the COVID pandemic, categorical exclusion of immigrants from the social safety net - even immigrants with legal status and work authorization - leaves families vulnerable to homelessness and food insecurity. To the extent that someone may be eligible for public assistance, eligibility depends on a bewildering array of factors including family composition and immigration status, type of visa or residency status, and whether the person has a work authorization or social security number. WIJ volunteers answered more than a hundred calls to our service line (509-237-8120) and helped callers navigate what, if any, resources might be available, and helped navigate access to those services. When assistance was unavailable or inaccessible and the family's need was emergent, WIJ provided small grants from donated and granted funds to preserve the family's economic stability.

Some callers were local partners like Northwest Immigrant Rights Project and Hand in Hand Immigration Services. These partners asked WIJ to help immigrants maintain or acquire legal status, citizenship, visas, and work authorization. The fees for these petitions, and the costs of transportation to the immigration offices – none of which are in Wenatchee – is often the only thing preventing families in our community from working and thriving. In addition to financial assistance, WIJ

Coordinator Irene Morrow continues to play a critical role with her knowledge of the healthcare system. Irene works closely with callers facing insurmountable medical debt and helps them apply for hospital charity care. Having medical debt eliminated or vastly reduced relieves financial and emotional stress on families.

How You Can Help Now:
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/cecilas-healthcare-battle>

Community Education

WIJ has also collaborated with our partners to offer several educational events in the past year. We are grateful for our presenters and everyone who gathered with us for the Know Your Rights Presentation with NWIRP, WAISN Legislative Advocacy Days, a U.S. Department of Labor presentation on farmworker rights, Building Bridges of Understanding Antiracism Workshop with Alex Schmidt, a Hospital Charity Care presentation with Tony Gonzalez from Columbia Legal Services, and a Labor & Industries Update with Alma Castillo.

In the coming days we will be working on a WIJ website, in-person gatherings, and developing specific volunteer roles. Your support and participation are essential as we continue our work in solidarity with community members and partners so all immigrants in our region have opportunity, equity, and justice. We look forward to having more opportunities to learn and work together in the year ahead!

In solidarity,

Jess, Rachael, Marichuy, Irene, Lupe, & Alejandra - WIJ Coordinators

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