LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WASHINGTON

WELCOMING IMMIGRANTS TO WASHINGTON STATE

State Study

NOVEMBER 25, 2024

For information, contact the League of Women Voters of Washington, Seattle, WA
www.lwvwa.org | info@lwvwa.org

Contents

List of Figures and Tables

List of Acronyms

ADA: American Disabilities Act is a federal law that protects people with disabilities from discrimination in employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications, and access to state and local government programs and services.

AIC: American Immigration Council is a nonprofit organization that advocates for immigration reform in the United States.

AIDNW: Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest is a nonprofit in Tacoma Washington that supports immigrants in detention and welcomes them on their release.

BFET: Basic Food Employment & Training

CBP: Customs and Border Patrol is a division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) responsible for border management and control, including customs, agricultural protection, and immigration, as well as border security.

CEO: Chief Executive Officer (of a company)

CIRA: (Tacoma) Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs are volunteers tasked with providing advice and recommendations on programs and services to further immigrant access to participation in Tacoma's economic, civic, and cultural life.

CHIP: Children's Health Insurance Program provides low-cost health coverage to children in families that earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid.

CLEVER: Career Ladder for Educated and/or Vocationally Experienced Refugees program

DACA: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (also called Dreamers) is a program for immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children that allows them to live and work in the U.S.

DEI: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is philosophy and culture that aims to support and accept people from a variety of backgrounds.

DHS: U.S. Department of Homeland Security is responsible for immigration enforcement in the United States, which includes preventing illegal entry, apprehending noncitizens who violate immigration laws, and deporting those who are not allowed to remain in the country.

EB-3: Is an employment-based immigrant visa that allows foreign workers to live and work in the United States permanently.

ELL: English Language Learner

EMT: Emergency Medical Technician

ESL: English as a Second Language

EWU: Eastern Washington University

FAP: Food Assistance Program Employment and Training

FMLA: Family Medical Leave Act is a federal law that allows eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year for certain family and medical reasons.

FY: Fiscal Year

GED: General Educational Development is a high school equivalency diploma.

H1-B: Is a temporary nonimmigrant visa that allows foreign professionals to work in the United States in specialty occupations.

H2-A: Is a temporary nonimmigrant visa that allows U.S. employers to hire foreign workers for temporary or seasonal agricultural jobs.

HB: (Washington) House Bill

I-130: Is a document that establishes a relationship between a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident (LPR) and an alien relative who wants to immigrate to the United States.

I-140: Is a petition to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for a noncitizen to become a permanent resident of the United States based on employment

I-485: Is an application for Legal Permanent Residence in the United States.

I918-B: Is required as part of a U visa application; it is a form signed by a U.S. law enforcement agency verifying that a crime occurred involving the victim in their jurisdiction.

I-BEST: Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program

ICE: Immigration and Customs Enforcement is a division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that enforces immigration laws within the interior of the U.S.

ICHS: International Community Health Service is a Seattle area organization rooted in the Asian Pacific Islander community; ICHS provides culturally and linguistically appropriate health and wellness services and promotes health equity for all.

ITIN: Individual Tax Identification Number is a tax processing number issued by the Internal Revenue Service.

JCIRA: (Washington state) Jefferson County Immigrant Rights Advocates is an organization serving immigrants and refugees on the Olympic peninsula with free or low cost legal aid,

emergency cash grants, assistance finding resources, community education, and advocacy on local, state, and national policies.

KWW: Keep Washington Working Act, a law passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2019 that establishes a statewide policy supporting Washington State's economy and immigrants' role in the workplace.

L&I: Department of Labor and Industries

LAAC: Language Access Advisory Committee

LGTBQ: Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual, and Queer

LPR: Legal Permanent Resident, an immigrant with the right to reside and work in the U.S. and with a pathway to citizenship.

LULAC: League of United Latin American Citizens

LWVUS: League of Women Voters of the United States

LWVWA: League of Women Voters of Washington State

NGOs: Nongovernmental Organizations

NWIPC: Northwest ICE Procession Center is an immigration detention center in Tacoma, Washington, that is operated by the GEO Group, a for-profit company.

NWIRP: Northwest Immigration Rights Project is a non-profit organization that provides legal services to immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in Washington State.

OIDO: Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman, an independent office within the Department of Homeland Security, assists individuals with complaints about the potential violation of immigration detention standards or other misconduct by DHS (or contract) personnel and provides oversight of immigration detention facilities

OPI: Over the Phone Interpretation

ORIA: Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, within the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, assists refugees and immigrants with basic needs, employment and training, health and wellness, immigration and naturalization services, and whole family services.

ORR: Office of Refugee Resettlement is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that helps refugees and other eligible individuals and families settle into the United States.

OSPI: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is charged with overseeing public K–12 education in Washington state.

PCO: Precinct Committee Officers

PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

ReWA: Refugee Women's Alliance is a nonprofit organization that provides immigrants and refugees in Puget Sound with wraparound social services.

RISNW: Refugee and Immigrant Services Northwest is a refugee led organization serving immigrants and refugees in Snohomish, Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan and Island Counties of Washington State. They provide community education and social services, employment, training, and ESL, support to parents and schools, immigration and naturalization services, interpretation and translation services, advocacy and civic engagement.

SB: (Washington) Senate Bill followed by the number of the bill.

SEATAC: Seattle Tacoma Airport

SIJS: Special Immigrant Juvenile Status is a federal immigration classification that allows certain noncitizen children who have been abused, neglected, abandoned, or mistreated by a parent and are in need of protection from a juvenile court to apply for lawful permanent residency (LPR) in the United States.

SSI: Supplemental Security Income is a federal needs-based assistance program that offers monthly payments to eligible citizens.

SSN: Social Security Number

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families is a federal program that provides financial assistance to families in need.

TCIC: Tri-Cities Immigration Coalition

TPD: Tacoma Police Department

TSP: Temporary Protected Status is a temporary immigration status provided to nationals of certain countries experiencing problems that make it difficult or unsafe for their nationals to be deported there.

T-Visa: Is a temporary visa that allows victims of human trafficking to live and work in the U.S. for up to four years.

USCIS: United States Citizen and Immigration Services is responsible for: processing applications for immigration and naturalization, establishing immigration service policies, and administering immigration benefits.

USRP: Refugee Resettlement Program operated by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement provides services to refugees and immigrants who have been granted asylum.

U-Visa: Is a temporary visa that allows certain victims of crimes that occurred in the U.S. to live and work in the U.S. for up to four years.

VRI: Video Remote Interpreting is interpretation conducted via video.

VSHSL: King County Department of Community and Human Services**,** Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy.

WAISN: Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network is a nonprofit coalition in Washington State that educates and mobilizes statewide to uphold and defend the rights and dignity of all immigrants and refugees, centering the voices of impacted communities.

WHCA: Washington (State) Health Care Authority

WNA: Washington New Americans Program) provides information and legal services to help immigrants naturalize.

WSTBCTC: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges advocates, coordinates, and directs Washington State's system of 34 public community and technical colleges.

Glossary

Asylees must demonstrate they have experienced past persecution or a well-founded fear of future persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion and cannot safely return to any part of their country of origin. Those seeking asylum are adjudicated when they reach the border or when they apply for it in the interior of the U.S. There are two types of asylum procedures: Affirmative and Defensive. Asylum seekers can apply affirmatively for asylum with the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security (USCIS). In these affirmative cases, adjudicators have the authority to approve asylum or refer the case to an immigration judge in the Justice Department. Asylum seekers who are apprehended at the border or in the interior automatically have their cases adjudicated by an immigration judge. If the immigration judge rules against them, asylum seekers can appeal to the Board of Immigration Review (BIA), also in the Justice Department. Both the asylum-seeker and the government can appeal BIA to the federal Courts of Appeal and then to the Supreme Court. Those granted asylum are eligible to adjust their status to Legal Permanent Resident one year after obtaining asylum.

Legal Permanent Residence (LPR) visas (aka Green Cards) for 1) close family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents (spouses, minor and adult children, and siblings); 2) employment-based visas, most of which are for people with a bachelor's degree or higher; 3) diversity visas issued through a lottery to people with a high school degree or equivalent coming from countries with low levels of immigration to this country; and, 4) refugees resettled in the U.S. from overseas and persons granted asylum after arriving on their own if they can demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution and resided in the country for at least one year after approval.

Naturalized citizens are individuals who have applied for and been granted citizenship in the United States. Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) can apply for citizenship five years after obtaining permanent residency. The spouses of U.S. citizens may apply three years after they are granted LPR status. The children of LPRs may receive derivative citizenship based on their parent's status. Those who served in the U.S. armed forces for at least one year may also be eligible for naturalization. Applicants for naturalization must show they can speak, read and write in English and pass a civics exam. There are waivers of the tests or other accommodations for older immigrants and those with a disability.

Nonimmigrant visas grant permission to enter the U.S. for those expecting to stay temporarily. These visas generally reflect the reasons people seek entry, with different ones for tourists, business travelers, diplomats, journalists, temporary workers, intra-company transfers, students, cultural exchange, victims of trafficking and organized crime, among others.

Other Legal refers to humanitarian statuses permitting temporary legal entry and stay in the United States. It is also referred to as lawful presence. These immigrants are not to be deported but do not have all of the rights of those granted LPR status. These include people with Temporary Protected Status who cannot return home because of conflict or disasters; asylum-

seekers who have not yet had their cases adjudicated; humanitarian parole that allows people to enter and remain temporarily for urgent humanitarian or significant public benefit reasons; and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which allows children who were brought to the U.S. at an early age to remain in the country without fear of deportation.

Refugees must demonstrate they have a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion and cannot safely return to any part of their country of origin. Refugee cases are adjudicated and approved while the refugees are still living abroad and are brought into the U.S. through the refugee resettlement program. They undergo numerous interviews and screenings to ensure that they meet the refugee criteria, and will impose no security or health risks to the United States. After arrival, refugees receive assistance from voluntary agencies funded by the Office of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) in the U.S. State Department and state government agencies funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). They are required to adjust to LPR status after one year in the United States.

Stateless persons are not considered a national of any State by operation of its law, that is, they do not have the nationality of any country. According to an analysis by the Center for Migration Studies about 218,000 US residents are potentially stateless or potentially at risk of statelessness (Kerwin, Alulema, Nicholson and Warren 2020). Stateless persons in removal proceedings are particularly vulnerable because they have no country to which they can return.

Undocumented (or unauthorized) immigrants have come in the country without inspection at a port of entry or overstayed or worked in violation of their visa and do not qualify for one of the other legal statuses.

Executive Summary

In 2017, Governor Jay Inslee issued Executive Order 17-01, reaffirming that "the state of Washington shall remain a welcoming jurisdiction that embraces diversity with compassion and tolerance and recognizes the value of immigrants" (Inslee 2017). In 2019, the Legislature adopted SB 5497, also known as the Keep Washington Working Act (KWW). In enacting the law, the Legislature held that Washington "has a substantial and compelling interest in ensuring the state of Washington remains a place where the rights and dignity of all residents are maintained and protected (SB 5497)." This study examines the role of state and local governments and civil society in carrying out the intent of the Executive Order and KWW, as well as the more than 75 other laws enacted in the past 15 years to help immigrants statewide. In addition to identifying state and local legislation, the study examines other policies, practices, and court cases that address the barriers immigrants face. It also looks at the role of civil society in advocating for legislative and policy changes on behalf of immigrants, as well the role of immigrants themselves in these efforts.

The League of Women Voters (LWV) national policy on immigration is the policy of LWV of Washington (LWVWA). While this position supports admission policies that are in the national interest, as well as protection of immigrants' rights, regardless of their status, it does not address many issues that concern immigrants residing in Washington state. This study examines a broader scope of policies affecting immigrants and also addresses the role the League could play to ensure immigrants have pathways to economic, social, and civic engagement in the communities in which they live. The framework of the study identifies the benefits immigrants provide as well as the barriers they face with regard to four principal issues in the state of Washington:

- Economic opportunities
- Language facilitation and skills acquisition
- Social inclusion
- Civic engagement

The study team, composed of League members from throughout the state, used both quantitative and qualitative analysis to address these issues. The sources of information include:

- literature review;
- survey of Local Leagues;
- state legislation, regulations and law cases pertaining to immigrants;
- census and other quantitative data on immigrants in Washington;
- Interviews conducted with 25 informants representing expertise in a range of issues, geographic areas, and socio-economic characteristics of immigrants, including state and county officials, nongovernmental organization (NGOs) that are led or work with immigrants, public schools, healthcare facilities, employers, and immigrants;

- a systematic review of websites and reports issued by state and local governments and NGOs working with and for immigrants and refugees.

This information was used to determine the composition of the immigrant population in the state of Washington, background on the contributions made and barriers faced by immigrants, state and local policies and programs that affect immigrants, NGOs working with immigrants, current policy advocacy on behalf of immigrants in Washington, needs of immigrants and gaps in policies and programs, and the extent to which different local Leagues in Washington engage with immigrants.

The immigration system is very complex; there are more than 30 different categories of immigrants, each with different rights and benefits, some with pathways to citizenship and others without. As a result of these complexities, immigrants with similar backgrounds, or even in the same family, may be eligible for different rights, privileges, and services, despite having similar needs (see Glossary and Appendix 1 for details about the categories of immigrants). For example, even within the same family, some legal immigrants may be eligible to naturalize and others not. For non-citizen immigrants, obtaining status or renewing visas is complex, costly, can take a long time, and a pathway to citizenship may even be impossible. This is stressful, especially in a mixed-status family where there is the possibility of family separation. In particular, obtaining work authorization is crucial to being able to support one's family.

Just over 15% of Washingtonians are immigrants. They have many types of immigration status. About half of all immigrants in the state are naturalized citizens, and the other half includes non-citizens, both with and without legal status. Immigrants with legal status include permanent residents, as well as foreign contract workers, international students, refugees, asylum seekers, those with TPS, and DACA, among others. Undocumented immigrants, those who have entered the U.S. without permission or who have overstayed or violated their visas, make up 3.4% of Washington's overall population and 4.3% of its workforce.

The contribution of immigrants to our economy is significant. Immigrant households earned about $73 billion in 2022 in Washington state. They paid about $20 billion in taxes, $14.7 billion in federal taxes, including $6.5 billion in social security and $2 billion in Medicare, and $5.5 billion in state and local taxes (American Immigration Council 2024).

Immigrants are even more important to the workforce; nearly one in five workers in Washington are immigrants. They are concentrated in both high-income and low-income jobs. As examples, 77% of all agricultural workers in the state are immigrants, 51.3% of all software developers are immigrants, 48.9% of all maids and housekeepers are immigrants, and 36.4% of all health aids in the state are immigrants. Immigrants are also more likely than native-born to start businesses; over one in five entrepreneurs in Washington is an immigrant and they generated $3 billion a year in business income.

Nearly half of Washington's immigrants come from Asia, and most immigrants (63%) have been in the U.S. since before 2010. More than one in five Washingtonians speak a language other than English at home. Most immigrants live in Western Washington, with King County having

both the largest number of immigrants, and immigrants comprising the highest percentage of the population relative to other counties in Washington.

While over 18% of home purchases were by immigrants, immigrants identified affordable housing as a problem. The lack of affordable housing is exacerbated by delays in obtaining work authorization, lack of English skills, lack of recognition and cost of certification of professional credentials, and/or having to take entry level or low paying jobs. Interviewees pointed to the need to help immigrants gain work authorization and recognition of their professional credentials.

Access to health insurance is a particular problem for about one in eight legal immigrants and one in three undocumented immigrants. Washington state has led the nation by providing healthcare to undocumented children and allowing undocumented adults to buy insurance on the health exchange (Hocker 2024). In the 2023-24 legislative session, the Legislature provided funding for 13,000 undocumented adults to access Applecare. However, the demand far exceeded this budget allocation. Access to mental health care is even more difficult for immigrants, many of whom have experienced severe trauma in their home country, in their journey to the U.S., and/or while in the U.S. There are long waiting lists for therapists who have language and cultural competency.

The study revealed a lack of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for both school children and adults. The study also identified a need for state and local governments to address language access to ensure that immigrants can avail themselves of government and community services and engage in civic life. At the same time, children of immigrants and immigrant children represent a pool of future bilingual workers. Much of this potential is untapped as only some school districts are pursuing dual language programs, despite a state program that encourages dual language education. There is a degree of irony in this given that school districts also are experiencing a shortage of bilingual educators; they have a pool of future bilingual educators in their classrooms.

Legal representation is the key to obtaining immigration status, but there is no right to public representation in immigration court. The study found access to legal services, the cost of applying for immigration status or naturalization, and the length of time for immigration cases to be adjudicated create stress for immigrants. The risk of family separation is the greatest fear voiced by immigrants. Litigation is also one of the few ways to overturn federal policies that harm immigrants, as shown in the successful court cases that Washington State and immigrant rights groups initiated from 2016-2020.

Anti-immigrant bias, discrimination, and safety concerns were issues raised by immigrants and immigrant-led organizations (*Reyes 2024*; *Guillen and Juarez 2024*; Goss *2024*). This is of particular concern for children, as they may experience bullying for dressing and talking differently. These experiences prevent integration into social and civic life, and it create barriers in terms of lack of trust.

Washington state is also home to one of the country's largest immigration detention facilities. Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC), located in Tacoma, is the only immigration detention facility in the Pacific Northwest and it is operated by a for-profit company. Among detention facilities in the U.S., it has among the country's highest use of solitary confinement, the longest times in detention, the lowest granting of bonds, and among the highest values of bonds set. Many of the people in detention are asylum seekers who have no right to free legal representation. Legal representation is the most crucial factor in winning their cases.

The many needs that immigrants face as they attempt to create new lives are often addressed in a piecemeal way by nonprofits or state agencies that lack resources. There are many nonprofits in Washington working with immigrants. Many of these groups are immigrant and refugee led. However, neither they nor state agencies working with immigrants have the capacity to fulfill the needs of all immigrants in the state. In addition to greater resources, there is a need for coordination of efforts. Study interviews revealed repeated calls for one-stop resources for immigrants and the need for advocates and navigators to assist immigrants with bureaucracy, language, and culture. In particular, those who work with immigrants identified the need to address immigrants' needs holistically because of the interactions among the challenges they face: status affects access to jobs; jobs affect access to housing and health care; and language affects access to almost everything.

The study also examined what Washington State Local Leagues are doing with regard to integration of immigrants in Washington. Using a survey, the study team found that about two-thirds of the local Leagues indicated interest in finding ways to connect with immigrant organizations and liked the idea of welcoming immigrants to their communities. Registering naturalized citizens to vote is the most notable action of local Leagues. About a third of Leagues also asked questions about immigration issues at their candidate forums. About 25% of the Leagues have partnered with a refugee or immigration agency that operates in Washington state. And, a quarter of local Leagues have provided legislative updates on policies related to immigration or immigrants to their members. Few Leagues, however, have taken steps to recruit immigrants and naturalized citizens to join their League. Most Leagues were interested, though, in learning more about the results of the study and potential actions they could take.

While there are many areas where the Washington state legislative, judicial, and executive branches have provided leadership with respect to immigrants, the Immigration Study Committee identified 12 issues impeding the ability of the state to address the needs of immigrants:

1. Countering xenophobia, discrimination against immigrants, and extreme anti-immigration rhetoric.
2. Likely need to litigate federal policies that harm immigrants and undermine the benefits accruing to Washington from a safe and orderly immigration process at the federal level.

3. Funding to ensure greater access to legal representation for immigrants in removal proceedings as well as those applying for citizenship, legal permanent residence, asylum, TPS, or other legal immigration status.
4. Provisions by state and local governments to provide accessible services to all residents, regardless of immigration status.
5. Need for a holistic approach to providing immigrants with services that takes into account the interconnected challenges that they face.
6. Coordination amongst the state agencies that interact with immigrants and refugees.
7. Working conditions for immigrants, particularly those in low-income jobs.
8. Access to health and mental health services for immigrants, regardless of their immigration status.
9. Delays in issuance of work permits, advocating the use of ITINs to access state services, exploring the legality of issuance of work permits or provisional work authorization, elimination or reduction in fees, and streamlining of the overall process.
10. Funding of programs to ensure greater access to English language classes, civics education, naturalization preparation, and interpretation/translation services for immigrants.
11. Closure of private detention centers, such as Northwest ICE Processing Center; immediate reforms to ensure the safety and well-being of those who are detained; and abolition of detention of asylum-seekers, except for purposes of establishing identity.
12. Implementation and efficacy of existing legislation and policies aimed at assisting, protecting and welcoming immigrants.

In addition, the study points to best practices that the LWVWA and local Leagues can adopt to help welcome immigrants and refugees:

1. Reaching out proactively to immigrants to learn more about their needs.
2. Forming partnerships at the state and local levels with immigrant led and immigrant serving organizations to advocate for needed reforms.
3. Enhancing efforts to help immigrants naturalize, focusing in particular on civics education.
4. Enhancing voter registration programs to include the newly naturalized, naturalized citizens new to the state, and those who never registered anywhere.
5. Translating election ballots into languages not covered under state or federal law.
6. Holding forums to help naturalized citizens understand the voting process in Washington state, as it may be very different from what happened in their home country.
7. Circulating the Leagues' civic education books to immigrants and naturalized citizens.
8. Sponsoring refugees for resettlement through the Welcome Corps.

1. Introduction

In 2017, Governor Jay Inslee issued Executive Order 17-01, reaffirming that "the state of Washington shall remain a welcoming jurisdiction that embraces diversity with compassion and tolerance and recognizes the value of immigrants" (Inslee 2017). In 2019, the Legislature adopted SB 5497, also known as the Keep Washington Working Act (KWW). In enacting the law, the Legislature held that Washington "has a substantial and compelling interest in ensuring the state of Washington remains a place where the rights and dignity of all residents are maintained and protected (SB 5497)." This study examines the role of state and local governments and civil society in carrying out the intent of the Executive Order and KWW, as well as the more than 75 other laws enacted in the past 15 years to help immigrants statewide. In addition to identifying state and local legislation, the study examines other policies, practices, and court cases that address the barriers immigrants face. It also looks at the role of civil society in advocating for legislative and policy changes on behalf of immigrants, as well the role of immigrants themselves in these efforts[1].

"It's crucial to recognize the resilience and contributions of immigrants in our community. Let's celebrate diversity and commit to building a more equitable and supportive environment for all residents."
—Marsha Stipe, Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition

More than 1.1 million foreign born persons reside in Washington state. Almost half of immigrants in Washington are naturalized citizens. Most of the remainder are legal permanent residents, who are eligible to naturalize after 3 or 5 years, depending on the category in which they were admitted to the country (American Immigration Council 2024). Most people admitted each year are close family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents already in the country. A smaller number are employees sponsored by U.S. businesses, persons

[1] The study team grappled with the best terms to use in describing the aims of a welcoming policy. The term 'integration' is often used to describe what happens to immigrants after they arrive in a country. Integration involves both immigrants and the communities in which they live. One thinktank explains its use: "Integration … is understood as a sustained mutual interaction between newcomers and the societies that receive them; an interaction that may well last for generations." Integration differs significantly from 'assimilation,' which assumes a one-way street, with immigrants doing all of the work of adjusting to life in a new country. Because these two terms are often confused, the study team has avoided, to the extent possible, using the terms integration and assimilation in this study.

admitted as refugees or for other humanitarian reasons; and diversity visas set aside for nationals of countries that have low levels of prior emigration to the U.S. Another component of the population resides in the state with temporary work visas. Still others are in more tenuous lawful statuses, with temporary permission to remain in the country. Still others are without legal authorization to be in the country. Immigrants are a disproportionate share of both high wage and low wage employment sectors. Net migration accounted for 86% of the state's population growth in 2022 (AIC 2024).

Scope of the Study

This study seeks to determine if the League of Women Voters in Washington (LWVWA) should adopt a position on how to welcome immigrants in the state. By "welcome" the study team means the setting of policies, legislation, and programs that affect immigrants after they arrive in Washington. The current LWVWA position on immigration, which mirrors the LWVUS position, is notable in focusing on admissions policies that serve the national interests while protecting the rights of immigrants, regardless of their legal status. The position does not address another important aspect of immigration policy; what happens to immigrants after they come to the United States. Given the League's focus on defending democracy and the right to vote, the lack of attention to civic engagement and naturalization of immigrants represents a gap in the national and state positions on immigration. The study provides an opportunity to broaden the focus and delve more deeply into legislative options at the state level for enhancing the lives of immigrants and the role the League could be playing in ensuring immigrants have pathways to economic, social, and civic engagement in the communities in which they live. It also allows LWVWA to assess systematically the extent to which current Washington State legislation, such as the 2019 Keep Washington Working (KWW) Act, is fulfilling the legislative intent to protect immigrants living in the state.

The study team has focused on four principal issues with respect to immigrants:

- Economic opportunities, as measured by access to employment that is safe, provides a living wage, offers labor market mobility, and provides decent working conditions.
- Language facilitation and skills acquisition, as measured by availability of English as a Second Language programs for children and adults, access to interpretation and translation services, and access to skills training and higher education.
- Social inclusion, as measured by access to affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, health and mental health services, and social services.
- Civic engagement, as measured by access to naturalization services (ESL and civics education), voter registration assistance, participation in civic organizations, mechanisms to fight discrimination/xenophobia, and mechanisms to build trust between immigrants and public authorities, such as the police.

Our primary focus is on the role of the state, county, and local governments and civil society in welcoming immigrants. The study team recognizes, however, that some barriers to the inclusion of immigrants result from federal immigration law and its implementation. The study

team identifies some of these barriers as well as ways that Washington and other states have used the courts and their own authorities to redress harms to immigrants and their families.

It is important to understand that the immigration system is complex. Some immigrants have pathways to citizenship and others do not. While there are over 30 different types of visas, immigrants can be categorized into the following six broad categories:

- Naturalized citizens are immigrants who have become U.S. citizens.
- Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs), aka Green Cards, are immigrants with the right to live and work in the U.S. and have a pathway to citizenship.
- Nonimmigrant visas allow temporary legal entry to the U.S. and in some cases the right to work. They include everything from tourist visas to foreign contract workers.
- Refugees and asylum seekers must demonstrate persecution and fear of return to their country. Refugees are approved outside the U.S. and eligible for refugee resettlement program (USRP) services, while asylum seekers must apply within 12 months of entering the U.S. and are not eligible for USRP unless they are granted asylum.
- Other Legal refers to humanitarian statuses (e.g. TPS and DACA) permitting temporary legal entry and stays and are recognized by legislation or executive order. While protected from deportation, they do not have all the rights granted LPRs and there is no direct pathway to citizenship.
- Undocumented or unauthorized immigrants include those who enter the U.S. without immigration inspection, overstay their visa, or work in violation of their visa.

As immigration status affects people's experience after entering, the study team has sought to disaggregate data to the extent possible. This is not always possible, however, because of weaknesses in the data. Moreover, the study team chose not to ask those interviewed to reveal their immigration statuses in order to preserve their privacy and to ensure their safety. For more information on immigration status, see the Glossary and Appendix 1.

Methodology

The methodology aims at providing evidence regarding the four principal issues regarding immigrants:

- How are immigrants and their families doing in Washington state, looking in particular at the four welcoming indicators described above?
- What are the principal challenges that immigrants face in Washington state? In what ways do state, county and local governments help mitigate barriers?
- What, if any, changes in key Washington state, county and local laws, regulations, policies, and programs have been adopted or proposed to provide a welcoming environment for immigrants and their families?
- In what ways do Local Leagues in Washington help immigrants, particularly regarding civic engagement? What else could Local Leagues do to welcome immigrants?

The study team has used both quantitative and qualitative analysis to address these issues. The sources of information include:

- literature review;
- survey of Local Leagues;
- state legislation, regulations and law cases pertaining to immigrants;
- census and other quantitative data on immigrants in Washington;
- individual and group interviews with immigrants on their needs and access to services, employment, etc.;
- individual and group interviews with officials in state and county administrative offices;
- individual and group interviews with stakeholders, such as nongovernmental organization (NGOs) that are led or work with immigrants, public schools, healthcare facilities, employers, and others who provide services or economic opportunities to immigrants; and
- a systematic review of websites and reports issued by state and local governments and NGOs working with and for immigrants and refugees.

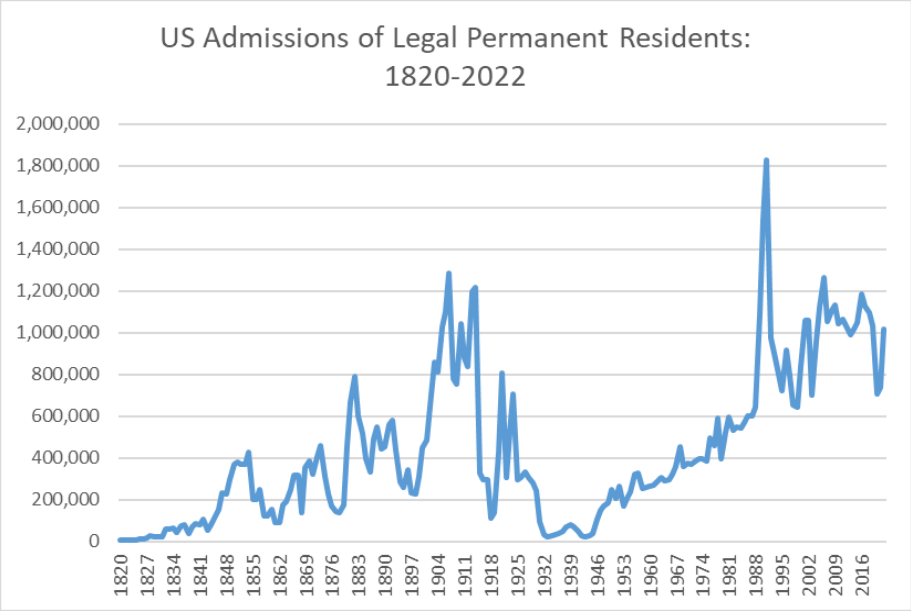
The study team, composed of League members from throughout the state, conducted interviews with 25 knowledgeable informants during the course of the study. These interviews form the basis for sections 3 and 5 and are listed in the Interview List. Citations for interviews are made parenthetically using italics to distinguish them from references in the bibliography, which are not italicized. After a full review of organizations that work with immigrants, the study team narrowed our selection of interviewees to ensure that their expertise covered a range of issues, geographic areas, and socio-economic characteristics of immigrants. One of the study team members then reached out to the prospective interviewees to arrange an online or in-person interview. In all but a few cases, where logistics prevented it, at least two members of the study team attended each interview—one to ask questions, the other to take notes. After seeking permission to record, the study team was able to record most of the interviews. Attribution of quotes is according to the preference of each interviewee: fully identified, initials, or first name.

The study team thanks the many people who took the time to help us understand more thoroughly the opportunities and challenges faced by immigrants in Washington state. The interviews also highlighted recommendations they have made for improving the lives of immigrants and making state and county policies more welcoming. Their work is much appreciated by the study team.

2. Profile of Immigrants in Washington State

The U.S. is a nation of immigrants, but the number[2] and the countries from which they have come has changed over time. National statistics on the number of immigrants arriving in the U.S. date back to 1820. The numbers have grown and receded depending on conditions in the United States and countries of origin (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. U.S. Admissions of Legal Permanent Residents, 1820-2022



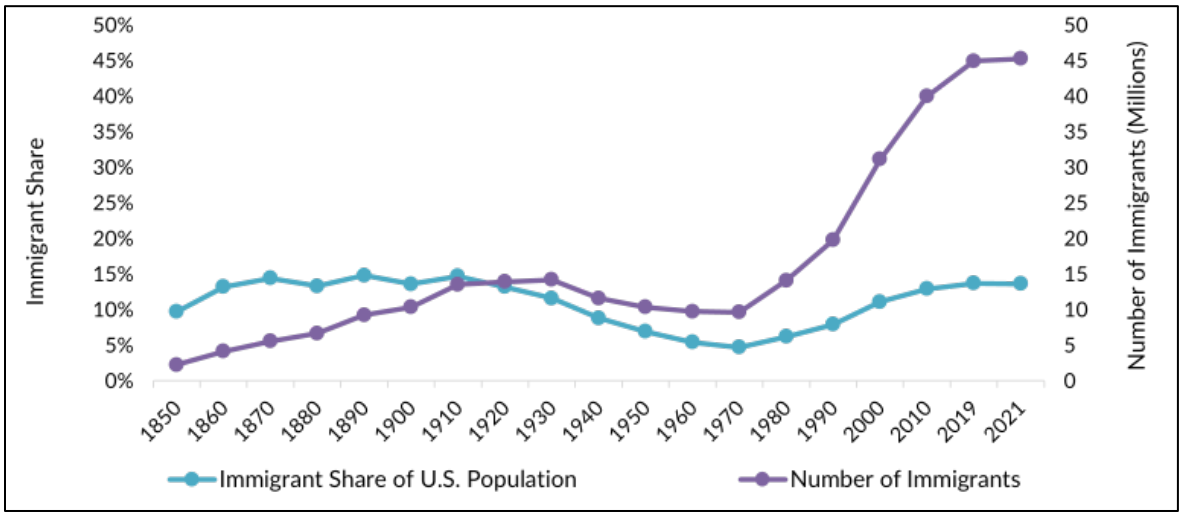
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2023

U.S. Census data has measured the foreign-born population of the country since about 1850. Figure 2 shows the total number of foreign born on one axis, with the line in purple, and the proportion of foreign born in the country on the other axis, with the line in blue. This graph demonstrates that while the number of immigrants has increased, their percentage of the population has not because the overall U.S. population has also increased. However, note that while in 2022 13.8% of the population were immigrants, the percentage of the workforce was 18% (Moslimani and Passel 2024); this is because a higher proportion of immigrants are of working age and employed than nonimmigrants.

[2] Data on immigrants, particularly undocumented migrants and temporary visa holders, is imprecise. Estimates of the number of persons in Washington are the best available census and other survey data. For example, since nonimmigrant visa holders are not always counted when they leave the country, USCIS has to *estimate* the total population of H-1B visa holders in the US as of a certain date (583,420 in September 2019) and state level data is not tracked regularly (USCIS n.d.).

The origin of immigrants has also changed. Between 1924 and 1965, legal immigration was largely restricted to Europeans through a quota system that gave priority to northern and western Europeans (Moslimani and Passel 2024) and barred most Asians from 1882 until after World War II (Ngai 2004). Since 1965, about 72 million immigrants have come to the U.S., with about half from Latin America and about a quarter from Asia (Moslimani and Passel 2024). Since 2007, there have been more Asian than Latin American immigrants.

Figure 2. Number of Immigrants and Their Share of U.S. Population, 1850-2021



Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2024

Of the immigrants in the U.S. in 2022, 49% were naturalized citizens, 24% were legal permanent residents, 4% were temporary lawful residents, and 23% were unauthorized immigrants (Moslimani and Passel 2024). "Unauthorized" immigrants include TPS, DACA, asylum applicants and many other categories of immigrants who have temporary permission to live and work in the U.S., as well as those with no such protections. Over half (54%) of immigrants in the U.S. live in four states: California, Texas, Florida, or New York, while 63% live in just 20 metropolitan areas. The metro area of Seattle is one of these destinations. The following sections examine the profile of immigrants specifically in Washington state.

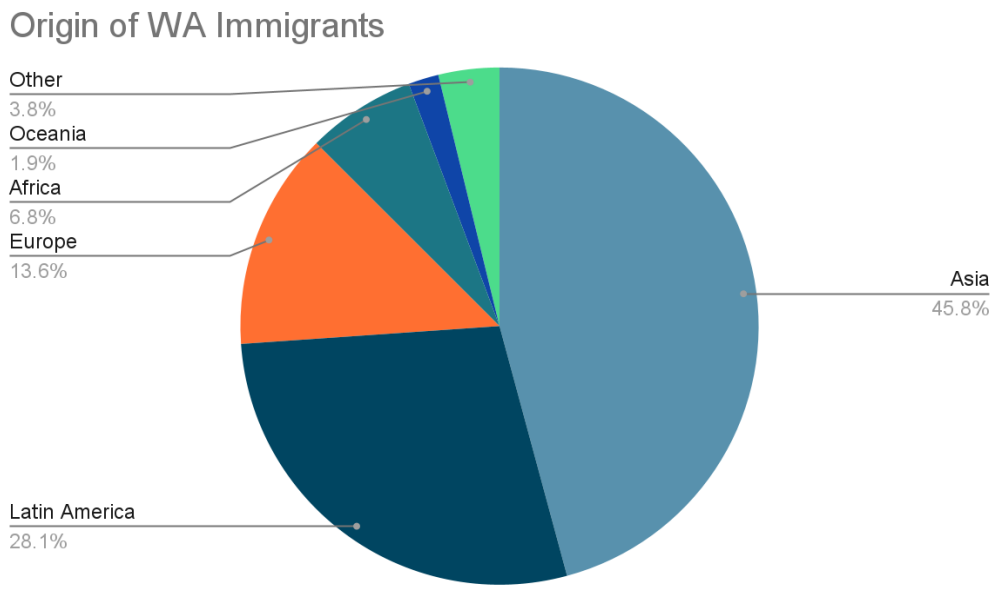
Demography

Washington state has a slightly larger percentage of immigrants than the U.S. as a whole. In 2022, it is estimated there were 1.2 million foreign-born residents in Washington state, representing 15.3% of the state's population (U.S. Census Bureau 2024a)[3]. Similar to the U.S. as

[3] Note that where there are multiple citations from the same author/organization from the same year, these citations are differentiated by using a, b, c, et cetera, after the year to ensure the specific citation can be identified in the bibliography.

a whole, 49% were naturalized while 51% were non-citizens, including those with and without visas. Most (63%) of these Washington residents entered the U.S. before 2010. What is different from the U.S. as a whole is that the largest group of foreign-born Washingtonians were from Asia, 45.8%, while 28.1% were from Latin America, 13.6% from Europe, 6.8% from Africa, and 1.9% from Oceania. The five countries of origin with the largest number of immigrants in Washington (Figure 3) are Mexico (21.2%), India (9.8%), China (8.3%), The Philippines (5.9%), and Vietnam (5.5%) (American Immigration Council 2024).

Figure 3. Country of Origin of Washington State Immigrants



Source: American Immigration Council 2024

Among the 2022 foreign-born residents of Washington state, 51.2% were female and 48.8% male (U.S. Census Bureau 2024b). While globally and in the U.S, many women are joining male spouses, a growing number arrive alone or with their children to pursue employment or escape domestic and other forms of violence (Le Goff 2016; Martin 2004). The median age of immigrants was 42 years, with 80.1% between the ages of 18 and 64 years, 5.9% under the age of 18, and 14% 65 or older.

Location in the State

King County has the most immigrants in absolute numbers and the highest percentage of immigrants in the state (U.S. Census 2024c). Snohomish and Pierce Counties have the second and third largest populations of immigrants in the state. Franklin, Yakima, and Snohomish counties have the next highest percentage of immigrants as a proportion of the county population after King County (Table 1).

Table 1. Washington Foreign-Born Population in Fifteen Counties, 2023

County	Foreign Born	Total Population	Percent Foreign Born
King	556,488	2,271,380	24.5%
Snohomish	149,523	844,761	17.7%
Pierce	97,513	928,696	10.5%
Clark	56,284	521,150	10.8%
Yakima	47,992	256,643	18.7%
Spokane	28,676	551,455	5.2%
Thurston	25,116	299,003	8.4%
Benton	24,965	215,219	11.6%
Whatcom	22,960	231,919	9.9%
Franklin	21,986	99,034	22.2%
Kitsap	18,881	277,658	6.8%
Grant	16,942	102,678	16.5%
Skagit	12,353	131,417	9.4%
Chelan	11,200	79,997	14%
Douglas	6,899	44,798	15.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2024c

Socio-Economic Status

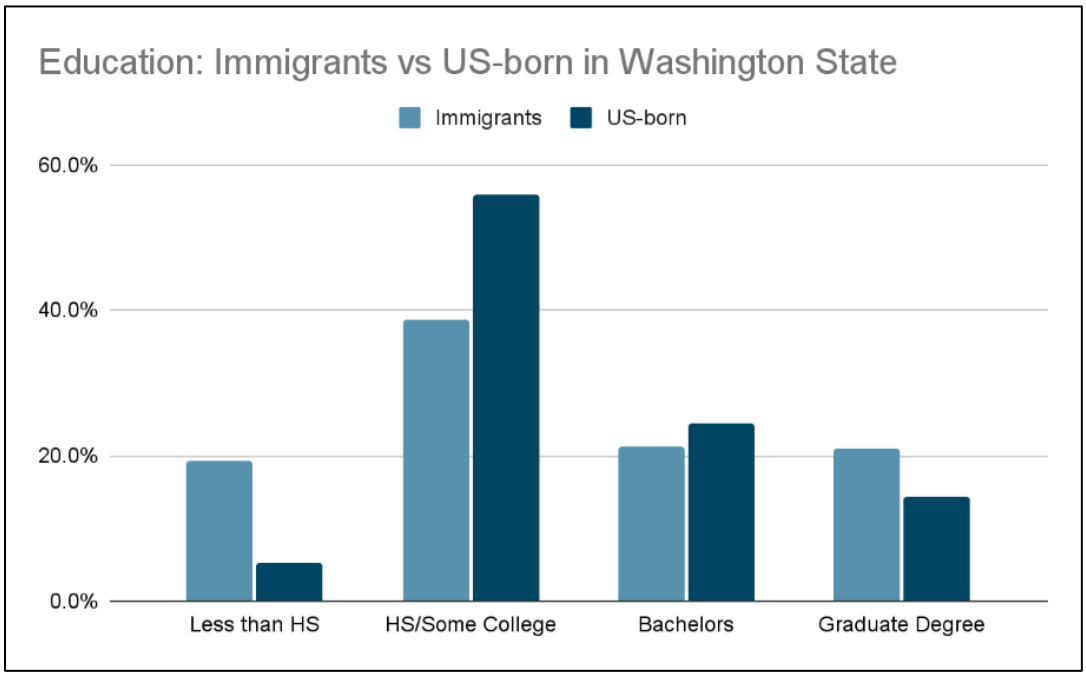
While immigrants represent 15.3% of Washington's population, they make up 19.3% of Washington's labor force, including LPRs, nonimmigrants, and undocumented workers (American Immigration Council 2024). Furthermore, more than one in five (21.1%) Washingtonians over the age of five years speaks a language other than English at home (U.S. Census 2024a). The most common non-English language spoken at home is Spanish, spoken by 8.8% of Washingtonians over the age of five.

Immigrant household income in Washington in 2022 was $72.6 billion (American Immigration Council 2024). In 2021, about 20% of U.S.-born Washington residents lived below 200% of the federal poverty level (Yen 2023a). The share of naturalized Washington residents living in poverty was similar. However, the rate of poverty for both legal immigrants and undocumented immigrants was much higher at 30%.

Immigrants also are an important component of homeowners. There were 293,300 immigrant homeowners in the state, about 18.5% of homebuyers (American Immigration Council 2024). They hold $231.8 billion in housing wealth in Washington. Another $4.2 billion is paid annually by the state's immigrant households in rent.

In terms of education, the percentage of immigrants with a bachelor's degree (21.3%) is similar to U.S.- born residents of Washington (24.5%) (American Immigration Council 2024) (Figure 4). However, immigrants are much more likely to have a graduate degree (20.9%) than U.S.-born residents (14.4%). Immigrants are also much more likely not to have graduated from high school (19.2% versus 5.2%) and are less likely to have completed high school/some college (38.6% versus 55.9%).

Figure 4. Education of Immigrants vs. U.S.-Born in Washington State



Source: American Immigration Council 2024

3. Overview of Contributions and Challenges of Immigrants

From the previous section, it is clear immigrants are an important component of the Washington state population; they make up nearly one in six residents of Washington and almost one in five workers. This is mostly because immigrants tend to be of working age. They are over-represented at either end of the education scale. Immigrants are particularly vital to the agricultural, IT, healthcare, hospitality, and entrepreneurial sectors of Washington's economy. This section explores specific contributions of immigrants as well as some of the challenges they face.

Contributions of Immigrants to the Washington Economy and Society

Interviewees talked about the many contributions that immigrants make to our state, from paying taxes to their unique perspectives and lived experiences that have introduced new foods, products, and services (*Natalie, Sammie, and Steffany 2024*)[4]. They talked about the talent pool of immigrants, and that they often worked harder than nonimmigrants because they came from countries that experienced war and/or had fewer opportunities. "We (immigrants) overcompensate and do extra work. The road is difficult. (*Natalie, Sammie, and Steffany 2024*)." An immigrant entrepreneur (*Sagan 2024*) echoed these sentiments, saying that immigrants are hardworking and brave, that she personally knows hundreds of stories of people who are well-educated and are willing to do whatever it takes to create opportunities for their children, to pay taxes, and to contribute to the community. Immigrants spoke of the importance of collaboration and multiple views that help to inform decisions and more efficient allocation of resources. They also spoke of being underestimated, "People assume I am the secretary not the CEO (*Natalie, Sammie, and Steffany 2024*).

"Immigrants are hustlers. They have 2 or 3 jobs and multiple workers in a family, they pool resources. They have larger families, they share houses."
—Olga PIroshky, small business owner.

Taxes, Purchasing Power, and Entrepreneurship

Immigrants residing in Washington state paid $20.2 billion in taxes in 2022: $14.7 billion in federal taxes, including $6.5 billion in social security and $2 billion in Medicare, and $5.5 billion

[4] Please note that quotes and paraphrasing from interviews is cited parenthetically in italics to differentiate it from bibliographic citations. The full list of interviews can be found in the Interview List, following the Bibliography.

in state and local taxes (American Immigration Council 2024).[5] Their purchasing power was estimated at $52.4 billion. The 80,500 immigrant entrepreneurs in Washington state represented 21.5% of all entrepreneurs in the state and generated $3 billion in business income. One such immigrant entrepreneur had this to say, "Immigrants are hustlers. They have two or three jobs and multiple workers in a family, they pool resources. They have larger families, they share houses (*Sagan 2024*)."

"When you come here as a refugee, you come from such circumstances (that) you are just happy if you are alive and you can eat. You will do everything you can just to survive."
—Dr. Radica Alicic

Undocumented residents represent 3.4% of Washington state's population and 4.3% of its workforce; 86% of the undocumented are of working age (American Immigration Council 2024). About one in five immigrants (22%) in the state are undocumented. They earned $10.4 billion and paid $1.4 billion in federal, state, and local taxes. Nearly one in ten (8.9%) U.S. citizen children in Washington live with someone who is undocumented.

The over 25,000 DACA eligible residents in Washington earned $921.7 million dollars and paid $254.3 million in federal, state, and local taxes (American Immigration Council 2024). The nearly 87,000 refugees in the state earned $4.4 billion and paid $1.2 billion in taxes, while the 4,200 TPS holders in the state earned nearly $120 million and paid nearly $26 million in taxes.

Patents and Innovation

Using historical data from 1990-2016, Bernstein et al. (2022) calculated that while only 10% of the U.S. population were immigrants at that time, they represented 16.5% of all inventors, produced 23.3% of all patents, and generated 25.2% of the market value of patents during that period. Immigrants account for more than one-third of US Nobel Prizes over the last decade (Economic Innovation Group 2024). This research demonstrates how vital immigrants are to innovation in the U.S. Although the study team was unable to find current data on patents

---

[5] These numbers do not include the costs of services provided to immigrants. The study team did not find reliable data estimating the amount of public funding spent on immigrants in Washington. Prior research on the fiscal impact of immigration indicated that the federal government benefits from taxes paid by immigrants more so than state and local jurisdictions. States and localities bear the costs of education and other needed services used by immigrants; immigrants tend to be ineligible for federal services, such as Social Security and Medicare although they pay taxes in support of such programs. Over time, however, the services offered to immigrants lead to better economic outcomes for beneficiaries and increase the tax payments to states and localities. As a report by the National Academy of Sciences (2016) concluded: "First-generation immigrants are more costly to governments than are the native-born, but the second generation are among the strongest fiscal and economic contributors in the U.S."

produced by immigrants by state, there were 3,101 patents issued in Washington state in 2022, of which Microsoft received 39% (Clickup 2023).

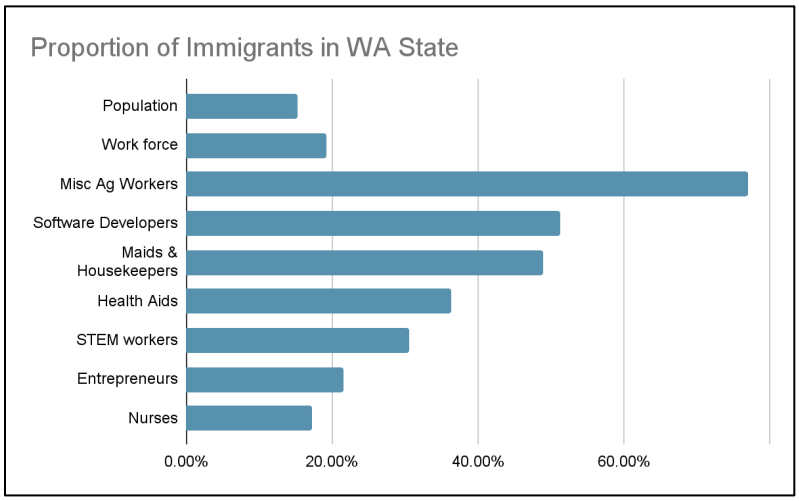
Filling Job Gaps

Immigrants are over-represented in many fields that are crucial to the Washington economy (Figure 5). They account for 77% of miscellaneous agricultural workers, 51.3% of software developers, 48.9% of maids and housekeepers, 36.4% of health aides, 30.6% of STEM workers, 21.5% of entrepreneurs, and 17.3% of nurses in the state (American Immigration Council 2024). Guillen and Juarez (*2024*) noted that agricultural work is highly specialized and called for teaching "the value of skilled farm workers to the community so our kids know we are valuable."

> *"I believe that eaters need to pay for housing and medical care to care for the people producing the food. It is a civic responsibility to take care of food workers."*
> *—Rosalinda Guillen, Food Justice*

There are three major categories of temporary work visas: H1-B visas for tech workers, H2-A for agricultural workers, and H2-B for non-agricultural temporary and seasonal workers. All of these industries are important to Washington state and they rely on the respective visa holders. In FY 2023 the State Department issued 265,777 H1-B visas in the U.S., 78% went to citizens of India and 9% to citizens of China, while 96% of the H2-A visas went to citizens of Mexico (US State Department 2024).

Figure 5. Proportion of Immigrants in Washington State's Population, Workforce, and Selected Professions



Source: American Immigration Council 2024

International Students

International students are an important component of our state's higher education institutions. There are over 23,000 international students studying in Washington state's colleges and universities (American Immigration Council 2024). They support over 6,400 jobs and contribute over $830 million to Washington's economy.

Cultural

Immigrants and their children bring their culture and language. The roughly 130,000 English language learners (about 12% of all students) in Washington state's public schools speak over 230 languages (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction 2024b). Spanish is spoken by 55%, but other common languages include: Russian, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Arabic, Somali, Marshallese, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, and Punjabi. Along with language, each culture has its own literature and storytelling, cuisine, arts, dance, fashion, and music. The cuisine in particular can be seen in the numerous restaurants and food stores operated by immigrant entrepreneurs (*Sagan 2024*). Washington's major cities are home to cultural organizations and festivals that promote the needs of immigrants as well as share events and classes that include foreign languages, cuisine, dance, etc. Festivals and events enrich the lives of all Washingtonians: Greek Festivals, celebrations for the Day of the Dead, Lunar New Year events, Refugee Choir, Mariachi, folk dancing from around the world, hula, etc. It is hard to imagine our state without the food, music, dance, and arts that immigrants have shared.

Major Challenges Faced by Immigrants

Despite the contributions of immigrants, many face challenges as well. Some of the most prevalent include:

- barriers, costs, and delays in obtaining legal status;
- access to shelter, healthcare and other services;
- exploitative conditions at the worksite;
- difficulty in gaining access to legal counsel; and
- conditions in detention.

Communities receiving immigrants also face challenges in welcoming immigrants, particularly when they have little warning of the arrivals of newcomers.

"A navigator is essential when people come into the country; someone knowledgeable about all the resources available. Knowledge is power."
—Sammie

Many of those interviewed talked about the need for navigators through the many complications of adjusting to a new country, culture and language. Participants at a meeting organized by Eastern Washington University (*EWU 2024*) identified the need for immigrants

and refugees to have places to meet each other, share experiences, and provide a safe environment for children to play.

One of the primary challenges immigrants face is discrimination. Immigrants spoke of bias and prejudice in hiring (*Natalie, Sammie, and Steffany 2024*). Anti-immigrant rhetoric is prevalent across the political spectrum and is directed at immigrants regardless of their status. Reyes (*2024*) called for exploring ways to counter anti-immigrant rhetoric. Immigrants were more explicit about the need to "Hold people accountable who make statements like 'go back where you came from' (*Natalie, Sammie, and Steffany 2024*)." There were also concerns that community-based organizations did not know their audience well enough to provide culturally relevant materials and may even have blind spots or discriminate. Immigrant children and children of immigrants in particular face bullying for dressing differently, such as a hijab, or simply having to wear hand-me-downs (*Shee and Torres 2024*).

In some cases, it is the immigrants themselves who need to overcome their prejudices. Sagan (*2024*) explained that for immigrants from many countries, the government is to be feared. Her own experience was that the government is here to help in Washington state. Participants at the EWU meeting (*2024*) noted that stigma about the LGTBQ community impacts immigrants and refugees who may have come here to escape violence against them.

Insecure Immigration Statuses

Many of the challenges faced by immigrants are caused or exacerbated by their lack of secure legal status and work permits. Reyes (*2024*) stated the "constant renewal and cost of work permits and late response is stressful." Those who are undocumented, asylum seekers, humanitarian parole, or DACA beneficiaries are most notably in this situation, although some may have work permits. Even legal permanent residents—especially those who have committed crimes at some point in their lives—may be at risk of losing their status. Not only are the immigrants themselves affected, so too are their U.S. citizen and LPR spouses and children who fear that their family members may be detained and deported. "(I have) memories of being scared that my parents would disappear…(I was) afraid of the police in South Seattle (*Natalie, Sammie, and Steffany* 2024)."

"A big thing that's sending a big fear in our community is the whole talk about mass deportation at the very high level so that's something our community is very concerned about. I guess the biggest fear of mass deportation is family separation."
—Alfredo Juarez, Farm Worker and Organizer with C2C

In these cases, there are no good options for the citizen children; there is risk in either staying in the U.S. with relatives or friends or relocating with their families to what is a foreign country with a language they do not speak. This leads, as the Chair of the Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition

stated, to a "persistent sense of instability and fear among immigrant families" (*Stipe 2024*). Guillen and Juarez (*2024*) were more explicit, "Our biggest fear is family separation."

Legal barriers at the federal level are the principal reason for the insecurity. There are few pathways to legal status for the undocumented, short of a legalization program. This is especially true for low-wage workers. The only LPR visa categories for low-wage workers, EB-3 unskilled workers, requires the visa application be submitted by an employer; the job must require less than two years training or experience; the work is not of a temporary or seasonal nature; and qualified workers are not available in the United States (USCIS 2024). Temporary worker visas are not available for those already in the country; they provide an alternative pathway for farmworkers and other seasonal workers to enter the U.S., but the number of available visas is limited.

Even for those who meet the requirements of a particular visa or citizenship, the path is long and arduous (*Sagan 2024*). Furthermore, many may not be able to afford to apply for it (*Peterson 2024*). For example, the fee for submitting the I-485 (Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status) is $1440 for adults and $950 for each child. They may also need an I-130 form (Petition for a Relative) which is $675, or an I-140 form (Immigrant Petition for Workers) at $715 plus additional fees, if applicable (USCIS 2024), in addition to fees charged by attorneys who assist with the applications.

"More information (is needed) on options and how to access them especially for people who are not eligible for usual services/programs. There is a lot of fear so people don't seek information."
—Stteffany

In the meantime, immigrants are often afraid to seek help from public authorities even when they are the victims of crime or abuse. They fear that local authorities will report them to ICE or CBP. The Sheriff's office in San Juan County has reached out to the immigrant community to alleviate some of these concerns, working with the Joyce Sobel Family Resource Center (*Reimer and Schollmeyer 2024*). As Reimer stated: "we want to have people come forward…. We are not here to talk about immigration status" when people are in need.

Shelter

The dearth of affordable housing in Washington was referenced in almost all interviews as a major challenge for immigrants, whether they are newcomers or long-term residents. This is a problem for all low and mid-range workers, but immigrants face even greater barriers. Finding low rent housing is the biggest barrier for immigrants (*Shee and Torres 2024*). Recent immigrants have no credit or work history to provide landlords (*Peterson 2024*). Asylum-seekers are particularly affected as they have no access to benefits until asylum is granted, and many of them have no pre-existing family networks in the state who can help them with housing.

Immigrants may not be eligible for public housing, and newcomers rarely have the funds or credit to buy housing, or even to pay deposits for a rental contract.

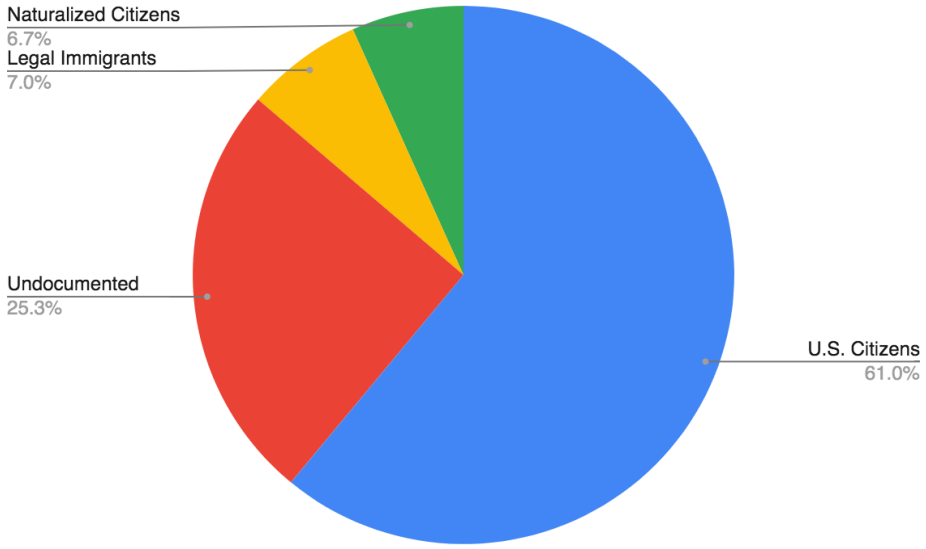
As discussed in further detail in section 5, some non-profits provide shelter for new arrivals, but the demand far outweighs the financial resources available. These are usually stopgap measures and do not benefit longer-term residents. Even though refugees may have housing assistance, it usually lasts for only three months (*Shee and Torres 2024*). Many immigrants are not eligible for subsidized housing; the King County website, for example, notes that those applying for housing must "have U.S. citizenship, or documents that show eligible non-citizen status… [and] provide a documented social security number (SSN) for each person" (King County Housing Authority 2024).

Immigrant and refugee families may need to move from one form of housing to another, leaving the children without much stability. This leads to misinterpretation of the needs of the children and families. Lack of stable housing is a major reason that children of immigrants may not be attending school (*Richardson 2024*).

Access to Healthcare

U.S. born and naturalized citizens have similar levels of health insurance coverage, but legal immigrants without citizenship are twice as likely not to have health care. In 2021, among Washington's population aged 18-64, 5.6% of U.S.-born citizens and 5.7% of naturalized citizens did not have health insurance (Yen 2023b). In comparison, 12.9% of legal immigrants did not have health insurance coverage (Yen 2023b). Undocumented immigrants fared even worse: they are five times more likely to be without health insurance. Given the relative size of these different adult populations, U.S.-born citizens represented 61% of the total uninsured in the state (Figure 6), while the undocumented were 25.3%, legal immigrants were 7%, and naturalized citizens 6.7% (Yen 2023b).

Figure 6. Percent Uninsured by Legal Status in Washington State



Source: Yen 2023b

Immigrants face difficulties in accessing healthcare because status determines access to social service programs and differences in eligibility which result in lower likelihood of having health insurance (*Goss 2024*). Those seeking to purchase healthcare through the Affordable Health Act find the prices too high given their income level. Several interviewees referenced recent Washington state legislation that allows people to enroll in AppleCare, irrespective of their immigration status, but it has a cap on the numbers who are able to access the program at present. Immigrants also have difficulties in understanding how the healthcare system works in the U.S. (*Reyes 2024*).

Guillen and Juarez (*2024*) stated in reference to the many undocumented agricultural and food service workers, "I believe that eaters need to pay for housing and medical care to care for the people producing the food. It is a civic responsibility to take care of food workers." Problems also arise when immigrants cannot communicate in English with medical providers, despite efforts to make interpreters available to all residents who do not speak English. Providers and patients may not know that the Washington Health Care Authority (WHCA 2024b) provides "universal language services to coordinate spoken language in-person, over-the-phone (OPI), and video remote interpreting (VRI)." See below for more discussion of language obstacles.

Accessing mental health services is also a problem (*Shee and Torres 2024*). Many immigrants and refugees have experienced trauma in their home countries, in refugee and displaced persons camps, and/or on route to the United States (*CastroLang 2024; Shee and Torres 2024*). Immigrants may be uncomfortable or unable to discuss mental health problems with English speaking therapists; at the same time, therapists are less likely to develop rapport with their patients through an interpreter. There may also be a stigma attached to mental health in their culture. Even if they seek therapy, the waiting list is long; in the Kennewick School District, for

example, there are only two therapists to work with all migrant school children (*Shee and Torres 2024*). In the absence of therapists who are language and culturally proficient, the immigrants and refugees are unlikely to benefit from mental health services. A diagnosis of PTSD is often a prerequisite for being recognized as a refugee since it helps confirm that the applicant has indeed been persecuted or tortured. Thus access to language and culturally appropriate mental health services are especially crucial for refugees.

"A huge need in the immigrant community is having that acceptance of mental health and get(ting) more providers so we have access to the counseling we so desperately need…. Many of our immigrants bring a lot of traumas because of where they are coming from."
—Annie Goodwin

A physician from Bosnia who now practices at Providence Hospital Sacred Heart Medical Center and Children's Hospital in Spokane told members of the study team of the difficulties faced by even highly educated refugees and immigrants for certification. She explained that she had to work at McDonald's for six months while going through the process to be certified as a doctor in the U.S. (*Alicic 2024*). While it was much easier for her given that she spoke English and her medical degree was from a recognized university, she would not have been able to complete the process without financial assistance from a couple from Richland who helped her pay for the exam and travel to take it:

> Without that help, it wouldn't have happened because you don't have money, you have $1,000 dollars for the exam, and you had to travel and at that time we lived on less than $1,000 a month. That was a lot of money for us. (*Alicic 2024*).[6]

The resettlement agency that sponsored this couple was able to do little to help them gain employment in their fields of study, as the organization's limited resources prioritize those with less ability to become self-sufficient.

Language Challenges

Immigrants face language challenges beyond interpretation in medical settings. Interpretation is supposed to be available in state, county, and city government agencies, but too often it is missing when needed for civic or social engagement (*Guillen and Juarez 2024*). One immigrant recalls being asked to interpret as a child and she did not know the Spanish word for mortgage (*Natalie, Sammie, and Steffany 2024*). Reliance on children as interpreters is particularly inappropriate when dealing with medical, safety, privacy, or legal issues. Schools, for example, struggle to have interpretation for all parents during teacher-parent conferences. Nonprofits serving immigrants face the same problem. As one agency head told the study team "Our in-

[6] Dr. Alicic did pay the couple back.

house staff speak 25 different languages, but our clients speak 65 different languages" (*Chavez 2024*). While better than having no interpreter, the use of phone interpreters can be problematic, particularly when the interpreter speaks a different dialect than the immigrant (*Schollmeyer 2024*).

Adult immigrants in particular need English skills for work, but they may encounter long waiting lists for English as a second language (ESL) classes or lack funds to pay. They may also need ESL targeted to permit them to practice their professions rather than basic language skills. Many of the classes are at community and technical colleges which in Washington state do not ask residency or citizenship questions (*Durend 2024*). These institutions receive funding from federal, state, and local sources, but it is seldom enough to meet the demand for courses (*Durden 2024*). There is a paucity of trained ESL teachers and few strategies to increase the supply.

"My grandfather and his brothers immigrated from Lebanon. I taught my aunts, uncles, and cousins how to speak English."
—Annie Goodwin

Children face challenges in learning English as well. Small groups that speak indigenous languages are at particular risk as there may be few interpreters that can help them. Newcomer students are challenged in districts without experience with these students and limited staff to teach ESL. As one interviewee stated: "We need more educators who are bilingual and understand the migrant experience" (*Percy-Calaff and Reyna 2024*). Shee and Torres (*2024*) talked about outreach to parents that the Kennewick School District does to help families understand what opportunities and scholarships are available for their children. In another interview, it was noted that the children of undocumented migrants generally have to find their own way to the school system, often through word of mouth (*Richardson 2024*).

Often older students are pulled between work and school. Immigrant children and children of immigrants must earn money to help their families, but most schools are open only during daytime hours. Lack of secure housing is also a critical issue hampering the ability of immigrant children to learn English and subject matter, particularly those in agriculture worker families who move with the crops they attend. Schools in these communities may not invest time or resources to help these children because their presence is short-term (*Percy-Calaff and Reyna 2024*). Food insecurity is another issue affecting students, particularly in poor families. Immigrant parents may be afraid of applying to local food banks that receive federal funding. Transportation to school is a problem for many immigrant children, particularly if they do not have stable housing (*Richardson 2024*). The very number of languages spoken by immigrants and their children is another barrier for both adults and children. In the Spokane school district, 70 languages are spoken by students; although 80% speak the top 10 languages, there are many smaller groups that also need access to ESL classes (*Richardson 2024*).

A challenge not only for immigrants but also local communities is to find the resources needed for multi-language acquisition programs. While many Americans do not see immigrants' language and cultural skills as an asset, immigrants are in demand by businesses whose customers are global. As discussed in greater detail in section 5, preparing bilingual, biliterate students is the goal of OSPI's dual language program (OSPI 2024b). They encourage school districts to develop programs that incorporate immigrants, the children of immigrants, and nonimmigrant children in classrooms to become fully bilingual and biliterate. At present, however, there are few resources available to jurisdictions that wish to launch bilingual programs. A recent study showed that, "In 2022-23, Washington state had 141 schools in 48 districts and state-tribal compact schools operating dual language programs. Within the next few years, OSPI estimates that the state will need at least 150 to 200 bilingual teachers annually to meet the demand for staffing of dual language programs. It is anticipated this annual staffing need will triple within the next eight years as another 40 to 50 districts are aiming to begin or expand dual language programs" (Gallardo 2023).

Employment

As mentioned previously, getting jobs in Washington is not difficult for immigrants. Getting safe and well-paid jobs is harder. Participants in a focus group in Spokane noted that jobs are often in the worst neighborhoods, pay low wages, and violate labor standards. They also noted that the poverty rates for low wage workers are very high (*Eastern Washington University 2024*). Goss (*2024*) noted that economic stability is impacted by status, that there is a fragmented approach to work eligibility, and called for all state programs to be accessible to all Washington residents, regardless of their status. Another interviewee noted that most families need at least two workers to get by because of low wages (*Peterson 2024*). Many migrants are not eligible for government assistance available to other low-wage workers because of their immigration status. Immigrants working in low paying jobs as they build English skills and seek credentials can ill afford the high cost of childcare; hence this is a priority area for organizations that advocate for new legislation.

Many legal immigrants in Washington do not have work authorization, a significant challenge for them and those who hire them knowingly or not. Refugees, asylum seekers, and other immigrants come to the U.S. willing and eager to work, but they meet with delays in getting work authorization (*Sagan 2024*). These delays cause unnecessary strains and costs to government and nonprofits to provide them with services, and cause immigrants to "work under the table" at jobs that are particularly low paying or dangerous.

While there is proposed federal legislation, the ''ITIN Reform and Tax Fairness Act of 2024,'' to reform the tax code to allow the use of ITINs for employment instead of a social security number, as suggested by interviewees (*Natalie, Sammie, and Steffany 2024*), it is unlikely to pass Congress. Another proposal suggested in the interviews was to have state issued work authorization (*Peterson 2024*). In their view, such solutions would promote both safer work conditions and better pay, reducing the need for government services. In 2023, the Attorney General of Washington joined 18 other states in calling upon the federal government to grant

provisional work authorization upon application, elimination or reduction in fees, and streamlining of the overall process (Raoul, Campbell and James 2023).

The conditions of work are particularly difficult for immigrants who work outdoors during the summer. Guillen and Juarez (*2024*) observed in their interview that climate change was causing extreme heat and damaging rains that affected agricultural workers and their wages. “With heavy rains, the outdoor fruit goes bad. If it is not high quality, we don’t get paid” (*Guillen and Juarez 2024*). The heat also affects immigrant workers in construction and landscaping, two other sectors in which immigrants are over-represented.

Other factors also influence poor working conditions for immigrants. One study in Washington found that “throughout much of the construction industry, there has been a ‘race to the bottom’ as employers compete for jobs primarily by reducing labor costs. This is done by paying low wages, but also through wage theft, off-the-books employment, and misclassification of workers as independent contractors” (UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education 2022). Undocumented migrants, in particular, work as independent contractors if they do not have work authorization from the federal government (Williamson 2023). Independent contractors do not receive the benefits that accrue to many employed persons, including ones that are required by Washington law, such as rest breaks, meal breaks, overtime pay, pregnancy accommodations, and precautions to prevent sexual harassment and assault. Reyes (*2024*) concluded that being “undocumented or unstable status creates poor treatment of employees.”

Exploitation of child workers is a further area of concern related to employment. Washington has seen an increase in the number of children who work as well as an increase in the number of businesses cited for child labor violations (White 2023). Migrant children are particularly vulnerable to abuse at the worksite. A national study of migrant children workers concluded, “Migrant children, who have been coming into the United States without their parents in record numbers, are ending up in some of the most punishing jobs in the country” **(**Dreier 2023).

Some interviewees were especially concerned about the growth in temporary visas to admit agricultural workers into the country as a way to undercut workers already in the U.S. who have been trying to organize for better wages and working conditions (*Guillen and Juarez 2024*). The H2-A visa allows employers to bring in farmworkers from a prescribed list of 87 countries, which include high, medium, and low-income countries. The maximum period of stay is three years. Those still in the country must depart for at least three months before entering on another H2-A visa. Similar concerns are raised with regard to the H2-B visas for non-agricultural temporary and seasonal workers (Costa 2022). While both of these visas are a way for employers to hire those with legal authorization to enter and work in the country, the programs can lead to displacement of immigrants and native-born who have worked for many years in these sectors (*Guillen and Juarez 2024*). Also, they note, since H2 workers are dependent on their employers for their presence in the country, they are more susceptible to exploitation.

Growers, on the other hand, argue that the state was already experiencing an out-migration of workers from agriculture and the H2-A visa is a lifesaver for many farmers (McCoy 2024).

Washington also is home to many H1-B visa holders who face challenges. These are visas for highly skilled and paid workers, many of whom work in the state's technology sector. The annual federal statutory cap is 65,000 visas, with an additional 20,000 visas for those who graduated with a master's degree or doctorate from a U.S. university. A lottery system is used if the number of applications exceeds the number of available visas (as is usually the case). Visas are available for three years, renewable for another three years. Unlike most temporary visas, beneficiaries may come into the country even if they intend to remain permanently. They may also receive extensions of their stay beyond 6 years if they have a pending application for a green card. Until permanent visas are available, however, visa holders may feel insecure, as an H1-B working in Dallas articulated during a study by Parvathi Rajeevan (2024):

> There is always insecurity here being on a visa. It's a big uncertainty to live in fear due to the visa. What if the visa is not renewed and you have to leave the country? What will happen to your house? What if something happens to me? Because your family members are on dependent visas, they will have to leave the country should something happen to me. These fears are always in the back of my mind.

H1-B workers can change jobs and not lose their visa but many worry that leaving their place of business will impede their ability to get permanent residence (USCIS 2024). Moreover, only the principal applicant has work authorization under the H1-B program. Spouses do not have authorization to work, even if their educational level is comparable, without incurring the costs of applying for their own visas.

H1-B holders from India have been particularly hard hit by the 438 tech companies that have laid off about 137,500 employees in the past year (Swathy 2024). According to a report by the Congressional Research Service, their pathway to legal permanent residence is blocked by an average wait time for a green card estimated to be 195 years because of numerical limitations on how many people from a country can obtain green cards (Kandel 2020). As an H1-B holder, they have limited options and time frame to obtain a new job, putting them at a distinct disadvantage in negotiating for a new job. Similar to H2-A visas, some H1-B visas are used to undercut local wages and reduce the ability of workers to organize (Costa and Hira 2020).

The entrepreneurs interviewed spoke of a greater need for outreach, language access, and representation to address the needs of immigrant business owners. They also noted the need to help migrants understand that the government is not the enemy, but is pro-business and provides assistance to business owners (*Sagan 2024*).

A final challenge is certification of skills. As discussed in section 4, Washington enacted legislation that allows immigrants, regardless of immigration status, to be certified in their profession or trade. Many immigrants cannot receive certification, however, if the authorities are unable to verify their competence to practice the profession. Language barriers may also impede the ability of immigrants to be certified. The paucity of ESL instructors makes it even

more difficult for immigrants to get the fluency needed to pass credential verification tests (*Durden 2024*).

Legal Services

The demand for legal representation exceeds the capacity of nonprofits in Washington. The immigration system is too complex for most immigrants to navigate on their own. This is true regardless of the type of legal help immigrants need. As the Executive Director of the Northwest Immigration Rights Project (NWIRP) told the study team, the process for gaining legal immigrant status or changing from one legal status to another is so complex that clients do not understand the rules, the delays, or the backlogs. This leads to frustration (*Chavez 2024*). Recruiting attorneys to work for organizations such as NWIRP is difficult, however, especially if they are needed in more rural areas (*Chavez 2024*).

For asylum-seekers, in particular, the absence of legal representation can be a matter of life and death. Many asylum-seekers without representation are unable to fill out the forms needed to apply for asylum. They may receive deportation orders in absentia, without ever having their cases heard. To illustrate the importance of legal representation, among those who do have a hearing, 43% of asylum-seekers with representation receive asylum or another relief from deportation as compared to only 15% of those without representation (Straut-Eppsteiner 2022). Asylum-seekers and others in immigration court have the right to representation but not at government expense, since immigration cases involve civil not criminal prosecution.

Immigrants may also need legal help in gaining access to social services; they may not be aware of services for which they are eligible or whether receiving services will affect their ability to become permanent residents or naturalized citizens. Access to social services in Washington has been improving, according to one of our interviewees, but she went on to say: “Washington state is a welcoming state but more can be done (*Chavez 2024*).” Immigrants unfamiliar with family law, housing law, and tenant law often also need legal aid in these areas.

The need for legal services in cases of domestic violence is particularly acute, especially if the abuser is the sponsor of an immigrant’s application for permanent residence. Under U.S. law, the survivor may be eligible for LPR status if s/he can demonstrate that s/he is the victim of domestic violence. According to participants in a group interview organized by Eastern Washington University (EWU), refugee women face special problems because of the countries from which they fled. Many are at risk of isolation because their cultures limit women’s activities. Immigrant women may not have a means of getting out of harm's way, particularly in the absence of legal help (*EWU 2024*).

In some cases, immigrants in criminal proceedings are represented by public defenders and other attorneys who are not knowledgeable about immigration law. Language barriers and inadequate understanding of the intricacies of immigration law can lead to poor outcomes for immigrants, even when they have representation. One interviewee emphasized the need for specialized training and resources.

Civic Engagement

About half of Washington's foreign-born population have become citizens of the United States. There are a number of challenges facing immigrants who wish to take this step. They may be concerned about losing the nationality of their country of birth and, in some cases, losing their ownership of property as well. They may not be able to pass the English language and civics tests required for naturalization. The cost may be prohibitive given their low income.

"We are vigilant in educating the community about who can vote and who can't as well as who can contribute to political campaigns."
—Malou Chavez, NWIRP

Other challenges arise in the context of voting. On average, naturalized citizens are less likely to vote than native born citizens. However, differences in voting patterns by race mask the fact that naturalized Asians and Latinos, the largest groups of immigrants in Washington, vote at higher rates than U.S. born Asians and Latinos. In effect, both immigrants and U.S. born minorities have lower voter turnout than native-born Whites.

The lower voting rates of immigrants may be linked to their lack of representation in positions of political power. A practical challenge is the difficulties many immigrants face in filling out a ballot. Washington state law does not require a ballot to be translated into the native language of the voter unless there are large numbers of people speaking that language. Although the naturalization process tests for language proficiency, the level required is well below the complexities of most ballot initiatives and resolutions.

Civic engagement goes beyond voting. Respect for others is essential for a democracy to function. That respect is often missing for immigrants. Stipe (*2024*) noted that immigrants face discrimination and systemic biases that hinder their ability to fully integrate and succeed. Civic engagement among immigrants is often hindered by fear and distrust of government institutions (*Stipe 2024*)." Goss (*2024*) echoed this in his interview, calling for a change in the anti-immigrant narrative that immigrants face and thereby increase the trust of immigrants in public officials. Language barriers often impede the full participation of immigrants in public meetings, especially when they are carried out in English with no interpretation. She urged elected officials to do more outreach to immigrants as well as better training of police. A model for helping immigrants and police understand each other is the Immigrant Safety Access Network, which brings together community-based organizations that provide support for immigrant and refugee families who experience disproportionate harm from violence (Arai 2023).

Percy-Calaff and Reyna (*2024*) noted another challenge to civic engagement–the lack of civics education for adults. They noted that Northwest and Washington history to newcomers should be available in simple English. Currently this information is not sufficiently available for adult learners at their level of English. While there are books for children (including ones published

by the League of Women Voters of Washington in Spanish and Chinese), a similar text has not been circulated among adult learners interested in becoming U.S. citizens.[7]

Conditions in Detention

The Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC) is located in Tacoma, Washington; it is the only detention facility in the Pacific Northwest and is operated for profit by GEO Group. With a capacity of 1,575 detainees, the average daily population in 2024 as of August has been between 690 to 775, however DHS guarantees payment to GEO Group for 1,181 detainees (Trac Immigration 2024). Until recently, most detainees have been from Mexico and the Northern Triangle, but Indians now make up about 30% of the population, many picked up by CBP at the Blaine border crossing with Canada (Center for Human Rights 2024).

26-year-old Mohamed fled Mauritania, where he was enslaved; there is an arrest warrant for him as a fugitive slave. He has been in detention 13 months awaiting his asylum hearing.

Detainees at NWIPC stay more than 50% longer than the national average for detainees in long term facilities (Center for Human Rights 2024). In addition, the facility has higher than the national average use of solitary confinement, lower granting of bonds, higher bond amounts, and higher denials of deportation relief. The result is that on average, detainees at NWIPC are much less likely to get a bond and much more likely to be deported than detainees elsewhere in the U.S. There are also frequent complaints about poor sanitation and hygiene, inadequate medical care, and the high cost of phone calls and commissary items. Furthermore, visiting hours are rigid and inconvenient. Visits are only allowed twice weekly for one hour each at specific times for each pod; for example, women in the lowest security level pod are allowed visitors for one hour on Tuesdays between 2:30 and 4 pm and on Saturdays between 7 and 8:30am (ICE 2024).

A is an LGBTQ indigenous women who fled Mexico with her minor sisters because her father intended to sell them. She has been an agricultural worker

---

[7] There are two versions of "The State We're In": one written for third grade to fifth grade readers and one for eighth through 12th grade readers. While ostensibly for children, the books contain information on Washington and Native American history and civics in simple English that could be read by an intermediate English speaker. https://oercommons.org/courseware/lesson/80327/overview or https://lwvwaef.myshopify.com/

since she was 8. She fears retribution from her father and her community. She was deported.

---

4. Immigration Laws and Policies Affecting Immigrants in Washington

Although immigration—that is, who enters the country and under what circumstances—is governed by federal laws and policies, states and localities enact laws and policies that have significant impact on how immigrants fare after arrival. Washington state has long been a leader in adopting legislation that aims to protect the rights of immigrants and help them adapt to life in the United States. At the same time, federal laws and policies affect Washington's immigrant population. While some federal interventions may aid immigrants residing in the state, others have negative effects on this population and hamper their ability to adjust to life in Washington.

This chapter examines relevant laws adopted by the state that affect the situation of immigrants. The chapter also discusses the effect of federal laws and policies on immigrants in the state, focusing in particular on those that cause heightened levels of insecurity among the immigrant population. Subsequent chapters discuss efforts to address gaps in legislation and problems of implementation of current law.

Washington State Laws

During the past 15 years, the state has enacted more than 75 bills that refer to immigrants. In some cases, immigrants, refugees, trafficked persons, and other newcomers have been added to the vulnerable or marginal populations that are to be consulted, assisted, or recognized as distinct groups. Other bills deal specifically with their needs. This report does not attempt to cover all of this large body of legislation. Instead, it focuses on legislation that is directly relevant to our theme: welcoming immigrants to Washington.

Social Inclusion

As early as 1993, Washington adopted HB 1444,[8] becoming the first in the country to allow residents of the state to obtain a driver's license, regardless of immigration status. Applicants do not need to present a social security number; instead, they can prove residency with documents such as a home utility bill, a car title, bank-issued documents, and Washington school transcripts, as long as the document shows the applicant's name and current residence. This was an important breakthrough to permit undocumented immigrants to be able to drive to work, take children to school or medical appointments, and to other residents of the state who are safer on the roads knowing that drivers had passed their driving exam.

[8] All references to legislation in this document refer to House or Senate bills that have been enacted into law in the state of Washington, unless otherwise cited.

"We need a tax code that reflects (that) Washington is a welcoming state."
—Eli Goss, One America

More legislation and administrative actions followed that provided access to various social services to immigrants. These included important public benefits programs that enhance the ability of immigrants to live decent, safe lives in Washington. The following are some of the benefits available to immigrants, sometimes with restrictions, under Washington and federal law: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), TANF-Funded Child Care, state Food Assistance Program, Post-secondary education in-state tuition and financial aid, state driver's licenses, Housing Essential Needs Referral Program and Emergency Food Network (Orloff 2022).

Administrative and legislative actions have also opened up access to healthcare for many immigrants in the state. These include Prenatal care, Medicaid, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), access to AppleCare for children, and other medical services (Orloff 2022). Washington was the first state to ask for a waiver from the federal government to allow all residents, regardless of immigration status, to purchase health insurance under the Affordable Health Care Act. In the 2024 legislative session, Washington adopted legislation allowing up to 13,000 undocumented adult immigrants to access Extended Apple Health, Washington's Medicaid program (HB 1889). The cap on enrollments was met soon after implementation, demonstrating the high need for such services (Washington State Health Care Authority 2024a).

Under current law, the ability to use these public benefits varies depending on program and immigration status. Federal laws restrict access to some programs, such as TANF, but allow states to be more or less restrictive. Generally, Washington has been less restrictive, allowing a number of groups who are not eligible under federal law to qualify for certain services (Orloff 2022). This includes Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) who are disqualified from federal assistance because of time restrictions (that is, they became LPRs less than five years previously). It also includes people in other legal statuses, including asylum seekers who have not yet been granted asylum, persons applying for the T and U visas (for trafficking victims and crime victims, respectively), and those covered under the Violence Against Women Act IVAWA) Self Petitioner and Battered Spouse, Children and Parents Waivers. In addition, those granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) because of conflict or natural disasters in their home countries are eligible for certain Washington assistance programs. Those who applied for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and those granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) are also eligible for many of the programs (Orloff 2022). In 2024, HB 2368 was adopted to clarify the role of the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA), giving it greater authority to assist both refugees resettled in the state as well as other immigrants. The legislature allocated $32 million in support of this initiative, with the largest part of the funding going to services for asylum-seekers (ORIA 2024a).

Some social services remain out of reach of undocumented immigrants, either because the programs are federally-funded or because the legislature has not taken action on them. In

particular, undocumented immigrants are not eligible for TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Public & Assisted Housing, and Unemployment Insurance (Orloff 2022).

Economic Opportunities

Immigrants in the state have benefited from legislation and administrative action to open up educational and employment opportunities for them. As a result of a U.S. Supreme Court decision, Plyler vs Doe, school districts may not bar students from enrolling in public elementary or secondary schools based on the citizenship or immigration status of the student, their parent or their guardian. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has issued guidance that summarizes the requirements, letting schools know that they may not:

- Deny admission to a student during initial enrollment or at any other time on the basis of undocumented status.
- Treat a student differently to determine residency.
- Engage in any practices to "chill" the right of access to school.
- Require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status.
- Make inquiries of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status.
- Require social security numbers from all students, as this may expose undocumented status. (Adults without social security numbers who are applying for a free lunch and/or breakfast program on behalf of a student need only indicate on the application that they do not have a social security number) (Washington OSPI n.d.).

The guidance also reminds school personnel that "—especially building principals and those involved with student intake activities—should be aware that they have no legal obligation to enforce U.S. immigration laws (Washington OSPI n.d.)."

A 2017 Washington State Board of Education resolution reiterated the importance of supporting education for all residents, including undocumented ones, noting it was consistent with the state Constitution that holds that it is the "paramount duty of the state to educate all children residing within its borders (Washington State Board of Education 2017)." The resolution also noted the important role that immigrants play, regardless of status, in support of Washington's economic success. It further stressed the need to protect DACA residents, in particular, as the federal administration was trying to end DACA at the time.

There is no federal requirement for public universities to admit undocumented students or to provide financial aid to them. Washington legislation fills these gaps allowing undocumented students access to the state's public universities and financial aid. In 2003, the legislature passed Bill 1079, also known as the Real Hope Act, allowing eligible undocumented students to attend state universities paying in-state tuition if they completed a full senior year at a high school in the state and earned a diploma or received an equivalent (GED); resided in Washington for at least three consecutive years as of the date the person received a diploma or GED; continually lived in Washington since receiving a diploma or GED; and filed an affidavit verifying that they qualify to pay resident tuition and will seek legal permanent residency when legally permitted to do so (Higher Ed Immigration Portal. nd. In 2020, S 6561 was signed into

law permitting undocumented students to apply for various state loans to pay for their education (Higher Ed Immigration Portal nd).

The legislature has also tackled issues related to licensing of professionals and others needing certification of skills. Under HB 1889, enacted in 2024, licensure boards in the state of Washington may not deny an applicant from obtaining a professional license or certification because they lack citizenship or lawful presence. The law also allows an applicant to provide an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), which is generally easier to obtain than a social security number (Higher Ed Immigration Portal nd[9]). In 2024, legislation passed that enables residents with DACA to become police officers in Washington, which benefits them and helps local law enforcement agencies to fill gaps in their workforce.

Language Facilitation

Laws can affect the ways in which immigrants learn English, their access to translation and interpretation, and their ability to perform well in classes. HB 1445, a 2017 act relating to dual language in early learning and K-12 education, focuses on the first issue (An Act Relating to Dual Language 2017). The goal of the program is for students to become proficient and literate in both languages, while also meeting high academic standards in all subject areas.

In 2018, a Washington law was enacted to help school districts provide both oral and sign language interpretation more effectively. Public schools must designate a language access "navigator" to "oversee how the school collects and reports data on languages spoken in the district, track requests for interpreters and collect feedback from participants on a school's language-access provisions and the effectiveness of the interpretation services provided" (Jenn Smith 2022). The Washington school directors' association, in collaboration with OSPI, was charged with providing a model policy and procedures for implementing a language access program for culturally responsive, systemic family engagement (HB 1153 2018), amongst other provisions (An Act Relating to Language Access in Public Schools 2024).

Other state entities rely on federal laws to assure residents that they are obliged to provide interpretation. For example, the Washington State Health Authority (2024b) website states: "According to federal laws like Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), your provider is required to offer language assistance, including spoken and sign language support. If your provider refuses to provide language access services, it can be considered discrimination."

Legal Protection

In May 2019, Washington enacted SB 5497, also known as the Keep Washington Working Act (KWW). The bill establishes a statewide policy that provides considerable protection to all immigrants in the state, including the undocumented. According to the Attorney General, the legislation ensures "the state of Washington remains a place where the rights and dignity of all

[9] nd stands for "no date," it is used to indicate that no publication date was given in the source document.

residents are maintained and protected in order to keep Washington working (Washington State Office of the Attorney General 2019)."

KWW restricts the extent to which Washington authorities may participate in the enforcement of federal immigration laws. For example, it prohibits state and local authorities from complying with voluntary immigration holds; giving the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency and other federal authorities "nonpublic" personal data about people; interviewing people within their custody; asking about peoples' immigration status or place of birth unless the information relevant to a violation of state law or an investigation; entering into agreements with federal agencies or cooperating in enforcing immigration laws; or depriving people of access to public benefits based on their immigration status" (Hilotin-Lee 2023). Depending on the situation, intentionally violating KWW may constitute a criminal violation under Washington law (Washington State Office of the Attorney General 2019b). KWW has limitations, however. A recent report from the Human Rights Institute at the University of Washington points out that it "does not task any agency with monitoring or responding to violations of the law. And it does not contain a private right of action, which would incentivize efforts to secure compliance by allowing individuals or organizations to recover damages from jurisdictions that violate the law" (Center for Human Rights 2024). Washington has also passed a number of laws aimed at overseeing or eliminating detention of immigrants in the state. These are discussed below.

Civic Engagement

Many laws enacted in Washington focus on the involvement of immigrants and refugees in civic activities. For example, one of the aims of the legislation on interpretation services in schools discussed previously is geared towards enabling non-English speaking parents to be more involved in the education of their children. Other legislation has added immigrants, refugees, trafficking survivors, and others to task forces, committees, and commissions that inform decision-making at the state and local levels. For example, HB 2556, enacted in 2020, requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to consult with "an organization that represents the interests of refugee and immigrant communities [and] a bilingual chil care provider whose first language is not English in devising a community-based training pathway for licensed child care providers to meet professional education requirements" (HB 2556 2020).

Federal Laws and Policies Affecting Washington

This section discusses ways in which federal laws and policies affect immigrants in Washington. It focuses specifically on detention of immigrants and more broadly on litigation that the Washington Attorney General has brought against the federal government.

Washington state has one of the largest detention centers in the country. Based in Tacoma, it houses detainees from throughout the country. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) authorizes the detention of immigrants pending a decision on whether they are to be removed from the country. Most detention is discretionary; the federal enforcement agencies may release those who are apprehended on their own recognizance or on bond. Detention is

required under the law when the immigrant has committed specified criminal or terrorism acts including crimes involving moral turpitude, drug crimes, aggravated felonies, and membership in a terrorist organization (Smith, H. 2022). Congress determines the annual number of detention beds available through the Congressional appropriations process. For FY2024, Congress provided funding to detain an average of 41,500 noncitizens daily, at a cost of approximately $3.4 billion (American Immigration Law Association 2024). This is equivalent to spending $224.46 per day per detainee.

Some immigrants are released from detention as part of an alternative-to-detention program that uses a variety of ways to help ensure that the immigrants will appear for future immigration court hearings. These range from electronic monitoring to a Congressionally-mandated case management system that not only keeps track of those released from detention but also provides help, including orientation to the legal process, legal assistance, social services, and transportation (ICE 2024).

Special rules apply to unaccompanied children. The legislation creating the Department of Homeland Security in 2002 gave custody of unaccompanied children to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officers are to hand over the children to ORR after apprehending them. In addition, actions related to these children are subject to the Flores Agreement signed in 1997, which defines the conditions under which children could be held. Since the agreement entered into force, the organizations representing the children have frequently taken the government back to court, protesting specific actions. The presiding judge recently held that ORR would no longer be under the scrutiny of the court because it had issued acceptable regulatory standards for children under its custody. DHS agencies that initially detain the children remain under the agreement.

Washington has tried to remedy the problems experienced by immigrants who are detained in the state through laws and litigation. KWW prohibits local jurisdictions in Washington from signing contracts with federal authorities to run civil immigration detention facilities. It also prohibits compliance with federal requests to hold immigrants in their custody after they have served their sentence. HB 1090 signed in 2021 forbids the use of private detention. The GEO Group runs the Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC), the only private detention in the state. Presumably when the current contract between GEO and ICE expires, the NWIPC will no longer be operated by a private firm. In 2023, legislation passed (HB 1470) to allow the Washington State Department of Health to inspect the NWIPC. There is a committee currently setting rules so the legislation can go into effect.

The attorney general has sued GEO, the private company that runs the facility under a contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for paying only $1 per day for work performed at the detention center by those detained, in violation of the state's minimum wage requirement (Washington Office of the Attorney General 2021; https://welcomeback.highline.edu/). The state also sued GEO for not permitting the state's

Department of Health and Department of Labor and Industries to inspect conditions in the detention center (Fowler 2024). Final decisions on these cases are pending.

The Attorney General's (AG) office has led or joined other litigation against the federal government when the protection of immigrants was at stake. In 2017, the AG's office successfully challenged President Trump's first and second travel bans, although the Supreme Court allowed the third iteration to go forward. The complaint noted potential harm to at least 7,279 immigrants in Washington in arguing that the state had standing to sue. A 2019 case challenged a federal administration rule that "remove significant protections against the mistreatment of immigrant children and families apprehended at the U.S. border, allowing for their indefinite detention in facilities without adequate standards of care or state oversight" (Washington Office of the Attorney General 2019a). Other successful challenges stopped the administration's attempt to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, end the DACA program, and change the rules on 'public charge' so that if "an immigrant who is legally in the country uses public benefits to which he or she is entitled …., the federal government may revoke their legal status, or even deport them" (Washington Office of the Attorney General 2023).

Local Laws and Policies

County, city, school district laws, policies, and budgets also impact immigrants. Language accessibility and outreach policies directly affect non-English speakers' ability to access local services. This is particularly crucial for emergency services such as police and fire; dispatchers and EMT who lack access to interpretation services or training in their use can fail to provide needed services. Adequate language access is determined by local political representatives' budget decisions. Whether they extend interpretation services to all county and city services is a policy and budgetary decision that affects not only immigrants' access to local services, but their civic engagement. Furthermore, officials need to understand that because someone speaks another language does not mean they are literate in that language, therefore, providing information in writing in other languages may not increase language accessibility.

As an example of the importance of interpretation policies, the Tacoma Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (CIRA 2021) worked with the Tacoma Police Department (TPD) regarding immigrants' concerns that children were being used by police officers as interpreters in inappropriate situations, such as in domestic disputes between parents. As a result, the TPD implemented a policy not to use children as interpreters. They also explored options to make it easier for officers to utilize a professional interpretation service, identifying a service upgrade that allowed officers to connect with audio or video interpreters in 160 languages 24/7 with just one touch on their cell phones. Testing this option with a small group of officers revealed much higher usage of professional interpreters. Therefore, the TPD adopted this service option for the entire department and the City of Tacoma is exploring using this service option for other city departments.

The policies of police departments and courts are particularly crucial for immigrants: whether there is adequate interpretation and assistance greatly affects safety and outcomes. As an example, Seattle and other cities/counties post policies about signing form I918-B (Seattle Policy 2024), whereas the city of Lakewood does not (Lakewood Policy 2024). This same kind of "discretion" can affect whether crimes are investigated, whether arrests are made, if crimes are prosecuted and to what degree, as well as sentencing. Immigrant crime victims frequently complain that the police and courts do not take their cases seriously, particularly if the victims are women or children (Zepeda personal communication 2024). For immigrants accused of crimes, discretion by police and courts may have adverse effects and result in loss of the immigrant's status and or deportation.

Cities often fund cultural events that celebrate immigrant cultures. Cities can also allocate funds to provide services specifically for immigrants, such as temporary housing for refugees or asylum seekers or low-income immigrants who are not eligible for other housing benefits. To address the lack of rights to representation and free phone calls at the NWIPC, the City of Tacoma has allocated some funding for detainees (City of Tacoma 2024).

The policies and fees municipalities set for business licensing affect immigrants, as well as having information available in multiple languages. Policies about identification requirements and acceptance of ITINs impact immigrants' ability to start businesses and buy or rent property. Zoning decisions also can impact immigrants; where they can start businesses, whether rentals can accommodate larger or extended families, and overall affordability of housing. Whether this information is accessible in languages immigrants speak affects their ability to start businesses.

Decisions and policies within school districts can have profound effects on immigrant children and the children of immigrants. While Washington state may encourage dual language programs and provide funding, school boards are not required to implement them. Thus, the Clover Park School District, where 36% of the students are Latino, does not have a dual language program and less than 9% of ESL learners met the English proficiency standard (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction 2024a).

Conclusion

The complexity of immigration law—experts often say only the tax code exceeds its complexity—is a source of insecurity and trepidation for many immigrants. This leads to a less than welcoming environment, even for those who arrived through legal channels and have resided in the U.S. for decades. This chapter has described the many ways that Washington state and local laws and policies have evolved to address many of the challenges faced by immigrants, as well as federal laws that affect the ability of immigrants to live stable lives in the state. The following chapters discuss successes and failures in implementing these laws.

5. Gaps in Welcoming Immigrants and Ways Organizations are Responding

In many of our interviews the study team heard how complicated, confusing, and expensive the immigration system is. The interviewees discussed the need for legal assistance to acquire status, navigation assistance to access services, affordable housing, advocacy for policies that enhance equity for immigrants, and both language and cultural interpretation to improve economic outcomes and civic engagement. They talked about the contributions immigrants made in terms of needed labor, skills, and payment of taxes. They also emphasized that immigrants were willing to work hard and take risks because of the situations they left in order to be in the U.S., but that have also made them vulnerable to abuses.

A number of organizations at the state and local levels are attempting to address the gaps that exist in addressing the needs of immigrants and refugees. This section describes their activities, accomplishments and hopes for the future. For more information about a sample of the organizations and their programs working on these issues, see Appendix 2.

Addressing Gaps in Economic Opportunities

Immigrants face problems in achieving their economic goals. These often stem from lack of English skills, difficulties and delays in getting work permits, roadblocks to the recognition and credentialing of their prior training, and getting appropriate information in a way they can understand it. Organizations and agencies are working on specific programs and advocacy to address these issues, but much remains to be done, and often funding is insufficient to serve all those in need.

Effective policies to protect immigrant workers remain a gap in immigrants' integration into the workforce. The fragmentation of the immigration system means there are different protections and benefits for workers with different status (*Goss 2024*). Not surprisingly, those with the lowest incomes and educational credentials tend to fall through the economic cracks. Community to Community is an organization dedicated to promoting the wellbeing of farmworkers, many of whom are immigrants. They work to increase access to state programs and benefits for all immigrants, regardless of their status. Currently, their focus is advocating for healthcare and unemployment benefits for undocumented workers.

Lack of resources to help immigrant entrepreneurs is another gap. Immigrants face discrimination, difficulties understanding the rules governing businesses, language problems and other barriers to opening and running a business (*Sagan 2024*). Natalie, Sammie, and Stteffany *(2024*) noted the lack of representation of immigrants in Chambers of Commerce, even though the national Chamber's support for immigration is clear:

> America has grown and thrived because we attract and welcome the hardest working and most talented people to our shores. They come here to pursue their dreams and

> build their lives.…The U.S. Chamber works for smart immigration policy reforms so the U.S. can boost economic growth, create jobs, and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship (Chamber of Commerce 2024).

The Tri-Cities Hispanic Chambers of Commerce and other Chambers in Washington, on the other hand, provide culturally and linguistically relevant assistance and support services at no cost to entrepreneurs, small businesses, and non-profit organizations, including immigrants (*Stipe* 2024).

Immigrants are eager to work so that they do not have to rely on handouts, but often have to wait many months for work permits. Our interviewees suggested that legislation is needed to permit immigrants to work or access services with ITINs or to have state issued work permits (*Goss 2024; Natalie, Sammie, Stteffany 2024; Reyes 2024*).

Another gap is funding for programs to help all immigrants find safe and well-paying jobs. Washington state receives federal assistance to help refugees. The funding for other immigrants is more limited. ORIA funds community-based organizations, resettlement agencies and colleges with close ties with ethnic communities to provide culturally appropriate employment services. Refugee and Immigrant Services Northwest (RISNW) provides local businesses with various services including employer tax incentives and subsidies for hiring workers who are low income and/or meet other criteria; cross cultural training for businesses to address cultural issues/barriers and effectively work with diverse employees and customers; job referrals; help to employers to diversify their workforce; and language interpretation and assistance with cultural conflicts in the workplace.

Language Facilitation and Skills Acquisition

This section discusses the programs available to immigrants in Washington to enhance their English language comprehension and skills as well as provide interpretation and translation when needed. During the study, the team interviewed educators who work with immigrant children in three counties as well as officials in the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (WSTBCTC). All of these organizations recognize the importance of helping immigrants learn English and verify existing or attain new skills for the Washington workforce.

Programs for Children

OSPI is acutely aware of the special needs of children who are English Language Learners (ELL) (OSPI 2022). OSPI has established several advisory structures to help it formulate successful programs for teaching limited English speakers. It runs two principal programs for migrants: The Washington State Migrant Education Program provides services to migrant children and their families. The program is federally funded as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I, Part C. The Washington State Multilingual Education Program provides support for Transitional Bilingual Instruction Programs and Title III services for multilingual learners and for American Indian and Alaska Native students.

School districts are where most English learning takes place. This is also where many of the gaps in implementation take place. The study team interviewed officials in Spokane, Kennewick and San Juan school districts. Each faces challenges stemming from the paucity of financial resources and trained teachers despite serious efforts to address the needs of students. The legal status of the students and their parents also creates gaps in educational attainment, as does the migratory status of some families. Efforts to address the barriers include: specialized offices of English Language Development; use of standardized screening and placement exams to determine eligibility; development plans for each student; supports for multi-and dual-language programs; interpretation and translation to allow parents to participate in the education of their children; partnerships with immigrant-serving organizations; peer assistance to help students navigate a new school system; support for immigrant participation in sports and other activities; and efforts to avert bullying (*Hillman 2024; Richardson 2024; Shee and Torres 2024)*.

One of the crucial limiting factors to providing ESL aside from budget is the lack of qualified ESL teachers. Given the number of immigrants and their children in the state, there is clearly a pool of bilingual talent that exists. Certification in teaching ESL requires completion of practicum, in addition to taking courses. This is particularly difficult for immigrants and other marginalized people who cannot afford to work without pay. Percy-Calaff and Reyna (*2024*) stated that to promote bilingual education, attract dual language speakers, and increase the number of teachers of color, funds are needed to provide paid internships. She suggested partnering with universities so that AA degree students could work as para-educators, be mentored, and take more classes to complete a bachelor's degree and their dual language certificate, but that paid internships were crucial to allow such students to complete this program.

A potential mode is the Pasco school district. It has the largest dual language program in Washington state. All elementary schools have dual language programs. The district has taken years building capacity, resources, teachers, curriculum and training programs. The district understands the importance of parental involvement, noting "Family involvement is a key factor in dual language education (Pasco School District 2024)." Students who engage in dual language learning through high school can graduate with a Washington State Seal of Biliteracy (Pasco School District 2024).

Educational Programs for Adults

A number of organizations focus on English language learning for adults, but resources are stretched and unable to meet all needs, leaving clear gaps in the system. Community and technical colleges are among the principal conveyors of ESL training. Durden (*2024*) described Washington state's 29 community colleges and five technical colleges as, "entry points…. All offer basic education, workforce prep and transfer degrees." However, the demand for classes exceeds the supply, and cost is often a barrier for many immigrants.

Libraries throughout the state also provide classes and activities for adult ELL. They fall into several categories. Some libraries offer Basic and Beginning ESL Classes to adults on a regular schedule. Other libraries have informal opportunities for ELLs to practice speaking English.

Libraries also provide free access to other online resources for learning a second language. They also offer bilingual events that allow Spanish-only and other ELL's to participate. Non-profit organizations in the state are a further source of information and, sometimes, ESL classes. ORIA provides support for some of these programs.

Interpretation and Translation Services

The study team's interviews repeatedly pointed to the need for interpretation and translation services throughout Washington. Parents in particular need to be able to communicate about their children with schools (*Shee and Torres 2024*). While there are good practices (see Appendix 2), too often language barriers cause problems for immigrants and those trying to assist them. The system is a patchwork one. Each organization is responsible for arranging interpretation and translation services, leading to a range in services. Some agencies provide in-person interpretation—the gold standard—while many must rely on telephone interpretation. Some organizations still rely on family, friends, and untrained staff persons to interpret and translate materials. Financial resources and lack of trained staff affect availability of interpretation and translation, as they do with other services.

Social Inclusion, Health, and Legal Services

Washington state has progressive programs that provide many social and health services for immigrants, regardless of immigration status. This subsection focuses on three gaps emphasized by those interviewed: the lack of programs that improve health and mental health outcomes, address housing problems, and promote access to needed social services. As immigrant and refugee women face challenges not shared by men, it is appropriate to begin with programs to empower this segment of the population.

Empowering Women

Immigrant and refugee women often come from countries where access to needed services are not available to them. In Afghanistan, for example, only 23 percent of women are literate compared with a 52 per cent literacy rate for men. Women from rural areas have even lower literacy rates (Afghanistan: Inter-agency Rapid Gender Analysis 2022). Refugee and immigrant women are also more likely to experience domestic, gang, and conflict violence than men (Ramage et al 2023), but may not receive culturally appropriate services (*Eastern Washington University 2024*). Violence may be a cause of their migration or it may accompany their transit to the United States. Isolation is also a problem for immigrant and refugee women, particularly among those who are older or lack social acceptance and belonging. A sense of loss, feelings of displacement, and separation from families also impede integration (Crawford et al. 2023).

Two organizations have tried to fill the gap. The Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) was founded and led by refugee women. ReWA services include ESL classes, employment and job training, housing assistance, behavioral health counseling, citizenship and immigration legal services, domestic violence support, and childcare support (ReWA 2024). Thrive International, which has offices in Spokane and Seattle, aims to ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers are able to thrive, not just survive. Its Women's Empowerment program is primarily focused on

community building and providing skills refugee women need to thrive (Thrive International 2024a). For example, Thrives' Mahima Project combines employment training with activities that help traumatized women recover (Thrive International 2024b). The staff for these programs are mostly immigrants and refugees themselves, are skilled resource coordinators, have experience in navigating the U.S. immigration system, and speak the native languages of the clients (*CastroLang 2024*). Our interviews highlighted the need for additional programs throughout the state that empower women.

Health and Mental Health Services

Access to healthcare in Washington is another gap. A number of organizations provide health and mental health services to immigrants and refugees in the state. These include government agencies, hospitals, medical practitioners, and organizations that educate immigrants and refugees about the healthcare system in Washington. Yet, a gap still exists in accessing these services, particularly for undocumented immigrants.

The steps taken by Washington to include undocumented migrants in state-funded health insurance programs may be the most innovative, if not fully realized, effort to date to address the gap in coverage between immigrants and other residents. Since November 1, 2023, all persons in the state, regardless of immigration status, are able to purchase health insurance on Washington Healthplanfinder (2024), and a limited number of undocumented immigrants with low incomes are also eligible for Apple Health Extension, Washington's equivalent to Medicaid. Organizations such as the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN) took leadership in advocating for these types of health reforms. The current priority is to enlarge the Apple Health Extension and make it permanent, by providing sufficient funding to cover all eligible persons (*Reyes 2024*).

Another gap is in the availability of services for refugees and immigrants needing mental health services, particularly those delivered by personnel that speak their language and have experience in what it means to migrate to a new country (*Shee and Torres 2024*). The clinics that see refugees within their first 90 days in the U.S. do an emotional wellness check. A survey of providers and refugee serving organizations indicates that there are long waits for mental health services, limited psycho-social programs, few providers from within refugee communities, and continuing stigma about using the available services (Refugee and Immigrant Health Program 2023). The shortage of medical personnel with experience with the immigrant or refugee experience is not surprising. It is a costly process for all health professionals to be re-certified to practice in the U.S., regardless of their specialization. There is only one program, operated by Highline College, that is focused on helping foreign-trained professionals. The goal of their Puget Sound Welcome Back Center is to "build bridges between the pool of internationally trained professionals living in Washington and the need for linguistically and culturally competent professional services. Its goal is to assist these professionals to make the best use of their professional skills through respectful, innovative, and individualized career counseling and educational services (Highline College 2024)." According to Will Durden, Director of Basic Education for Adults, this model should be duplicated throughout the state (*Durden 2024*).

Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing is a problem across the state. It affects those who were born in Washington (including the children of immigrants) as well as new arrivals from within the U.S. or foreign countries. As discussed in section 3, immigrants and their children face additional challenges in finding safe and affordable housing.

A range of organizations have focused on issues related to affordable housing. Resettlement agencies play a major role in finding shelter for those who arrive through the formal refugee resettlement program. There are five resettlement agencies in Washington: The Episcopal Migration Ministries (through the Diocese of Olympia, International Rescue Committee, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (through Jewish Family Service), Lutheran Community Services NW (through Global Refuge), and World Relief. In addition, Lutheran Community Services NW and Catholic Community Services of Western Washington are responsible for placement and services to unaccompanied refugee children.

Some of the housing problems faced by new arrivals and former detainees are being addressed by Thrive International in Spokane. Thrive purchased a hotel that has allowed it to provide shelter for refugee and immigrant families. More recently, Thrive expanded its geographic reach, providing shelter for asylum seekers in Seattle at the Doubletree Hotel near SEATAC airport. The asylum seekers pay a small amount of the rent until they are able to obtain work authorization. Since the parolees and asylum seekers are in one location in each city, Thrive is able to provide an array of social services in on-site facilities.

While important efforts, these initiatives do not fill the gap in affordable housing that affect the safety and wellbeing of immigrants and refugees. As most of our interviewees stated, much more needs to be done to address this issue.

Legal Services

Finding free or low-cost legal services is difficult for immigrants and refugees. One of the most active legal services organizations in the state is Northwest Immigration Rights Project (NWIRP), which serves immigrants statewide from offices in Seattle, Tacoma, Granger and Wenatchee. NWIRP focuses on direct legal services, community education, systemic advocacy and ligation. In 2023, they served 16,000 people with direct legal services (including legal services and workshops), brief services, and pro se assistance (*Chavez 2024*). NWIRP prioritizes those in deportation defense for direct services because it is an immediate need (*Chavez 2024*). NWIRP's ability to help immigrants is constrained by a lack of resources.

The City of Seattle's Legal Defense Network is an example of how cities and counties help immigrants find legal representation. The program is consistent with the city's strategic plan "to provide ongoing support to community-based organizations to build capacity and continue their work in providing legal services to individuals facing deportation and navigating the immigration court system" (Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs 2023). The network works with Colectiva Legal del Pueblo, NWIRP, and Kids in Need of Defense to provide assistance to immigrants in detention, facing deportation, or at risk because of their immigration status.

These immigrants must live, work, or attend school located within the boundaries of the city of Seattle, and have a household income below 200% of the federal poverty level (Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs 2024). Few other jurisdictions have taken these steps to provide legal representation, highlighting a major gap in services for immigrants throughout the state.

There are several nonprofits that assist detainees at the NWIPC, but the number of detainees far outstrips the capacity of the organizations to meet the detainees' needs as these organizations rely on donations and grants. Since there is no right to free legal representation, NWIRP and Tacoma Pro Bono provide free legal services and in some cases representation to a fraction of the detainees. AIDNW and La Resistencia provide assistance to detainees who have been released to reach their final destination or look for temporary shelter, while WAISN has a fund to assist some detainees with paying bonds. The Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also plays a role in assessing conditions in detention. It receives and investigates complaints from detainees and others at NWIPC along with other detention facilities around the country (*Nitsch 2024*). OIDO does not have the authority, however, to require ICE and CBP to accept its recommendations (*Nitsch 2024*). See Appendix 2 for more information about OIDO.

Xenophobia, Extreme Anti-immigrant Rhetoric and Hate Crimes

Addressing xenophobia, extreme anti-immigrant rhetoric and hate crimes is an important component of social inclusion. Interviews with immigrants raised the issue of anti-immigrant bias and fear for personal safety (*Natalie, Sammie, Stteffany 2024; Reyes 2024*) as an impediment to full participation in social and civic life in the state. A sense of belonging requires a place to go, the ability to express oneself, to connect, and make friends (*Shee and Torres 2024*).

Although Washington ranks second in the country for its inclusiveness (Samari, Nagle, and Coleman-Minahan 2021), an increase in hate crimes and bias incidents against immigrants and other minority groups promotes fear (Beekman 2024). In response to anti-Asian violence, the governor issued a statement to counter bias:

> Washington is a place where all people should feel safe and included. This is a welcoming state and I have a zero-tolerance policy for hate and racism. We must all condemn the acts of hate and violence displayed in the rising incidence of anti-Asian hate crimes in both Washington state and across the country. This is wholly unacceptable and must not stand (Inslee 2021).

The legislature passed a bill to create a hotline for hate crimes and bias incidents, which became law in 2024 (Beekman 2024).

Local coalitions also play an important role in building trust and understanding between immigrants and the communities in which they reside. For example, the Tri-Cities Coalition is a community-based volunteer organization that involves numerous faiths, professions, and experiences. Their objective is to educate the Tri-Cities community about immigration issues, rights of immigrants, services that are needed, and the contributions of immigrants. The

coalition also advocates for immigrants at the local, state and national levels (Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition 2024).

Civic Engagement and Advocacy

Civic engagement of immigrants is a crucial part of integration in the U.S. Some organizations in Washington focus on naturalization, voter registration and voting itself. The League of Women Voters' role in these activities is discussed in section 6. One in ten eligible voters in 2020 was a naturalized citizen (Budiman, Noe-Bustamante, and Lopez 2020). Another facet of civic engagement is advocacy in support of programs aimed at assisting and protecting immigrants and refugees. Although many organizations engage in civic engagement work, three stood out in our interviews for their civic engagement and advocacy efforts: One America, Washington Immigration Solidarity Network (WAISN), and Community to Community; all are immigrant led. All advocate for legislation that benefits immigrants and foster civic engagement of immigrants, given the discrepancies discussed above.

The goal of OneAmerica is building immigrant power for collective change. Their advocacy focuses on dual language programs, legal services, access to government services that are not based on status, and particularly access to affordable childcare (*Goss 2024*). They have proposed a one-stop agency, an Office of New Americans, where immigrants could seek assistance for their needs.

WAISN is a grassroots organization that brings together immigrant and refugee organizations from across the state. The mission is to "protect and advance the power of immigrant and refugee communities through a multiracial, multilingual, and multi-faith coalition. Our organizing strategy educates and mobilizes statewide to uphold and defend the rights and dignity of all immigrants and refugees, centering the voices of impacted communities (WAISN 2024)." Immigrants have called on WAISN to promote legislation on the need for affordable housing, access to healthcare, legal aid, help in gaining work authorization and a more stable immigrant status, and ways to address anti-immigrant rhetoric (*Reyes 2024*)." WAISN has identified several actions that could address some of these concerns, including: promoting the permanent expansion of Applecare (Medicaid), supporting access to supportive programs for those without status, supporting newly arriving immigrants by asking for city and county funds, exploring how to counter anti-immigrant rhetoric, expanding the cost-free colleges benefit to include migrants, providing legal and other help to workers who have reported labor violations, wage theft, safety concerns, and providing access to professional licensure for immigrants.

Community to Community encourages immigrant participation as precinct committee officers (PCOs) or assistants to PCOs, they sponsor an annual lobby day at the state legislature to advocate for policies to support farmworkers, support farmworker unionization, and educate immigrants about the role of unions. Current advocacy supports increasing funding to open up opportunities for more undocumented applicants to participate in the Apple Health Extension program (*Guillen and Juarez 2024*). Much of their lobbying focuses specifically on the needs of their constituents, farmworkers. They seek hazard pay for farmworkers, stemming the use of

H2-A visas which displace local farmworkers, and collection of data on the impacts of H2-A visas on the local economies, due to local workers losing jobs and H2-A visa holders sending remittances abroad, which otherwise would have been spent in the county. They also advocate for the provision of interpreters to improve civic engagement of immigrants at public meetings and teaching the value of skilled farm workers to the community so their children know they are valuable. This was echoed independently by Percy-Calaff and Reyna (*2024*) in their interview, that immigrants are essential to agriculture, “We feed the world.”

Conclusion

This review of activities in Washington state shows both progress and continuing gaps. However, there is a need for more resources and coordination of services. Washington has a plethora of excellent programs for immigrants but many of the organizations trying to welcome newcomers are stretched too thin and have too few resources to meet the demand for services. As one of our interviewees said, “so many services but they are not connected (*Durden 2024*).” ORIA also sees the lack of coordination as a major problem: “The lack of a coordinated system to welcome newcomers into Washington has created gaps and inequities in accessing services and supports needed to rebuild their lives in their new communities (ORIA 2024a).”

Some action has been taken to address this issue. Legislation adopted in 2024 codified the role of ORIA as the principal agency to “coordinate statewide efforts to support the economic and social integration and basic needs of immigrants and refugees arriving and resettling in Washington. The department shall coordinate with local, state, and federal government agencies and other stakeholders (Substitute House Bill 2368. 2024).” Mia Gregerson, the bill’s sponsor, acknowledged, however, that there was no money in the law to help ORIA fulfill its responsibilities for coordinating actions at the state level. She hoped that the legislature would pass such funding during the next session (Hunter 2024).

Representation of immigrants and refugees in decisions about themselves is another issue. It is not a coincidence that the organizations with the strongest voices for immigrant protections are immigrant led. The need for inclusion of immigrant voices and issues is recognized in many state agencies, local governments and nongovernmental agencies in Washington. Some cities and counties have created advisory boards or commissions on immigrants and refugees, but this is not universal throughout the state. Many immigrants have expressed frustration that there is no accountability on the part of local governments to address their recommendations and as a result immigrants resign (Zepeda personal communication 2024).

6. The Role of Local Leagues

Local Leagues undertake actions to welcome immigrants in Washington, such as registering people at naturalization services or supporting translation of ballots. These can have profound effects on immigrants and their experience in the state. This section discusses these activities in greater detail. It is based on a survey of local Leagues that the study committee undertook in 2023. The survey questions are available in Appendix 3.

The local Leagues that responded were based in Bellingham/Whatcom County, Benton and Franklin Counties, Clallam County, Clark County, Jefferson County Unit-at-Large, Kitsap County, Kittitas County, San Juan County, Seattle King County, Skagit County, Snohomish County, Tacoma Pierce County, and Yakima County. The study team also had informal discussions with Leagues that did not participate in the survey.

Survey Results

Outreach

A majority of local Leagues in Washington that responded to the survey reach out to immigrants in their community. Almost 54% of the responses indicated that the local League did some form of outreach and 46% did not reach out to immigrants.

The outreach mechanisms varied among local Leagues. For example, rather than reaching out directly to immigrants, the Yakima League partnered with agencies already serving that population. It joined the County Civic Engagement Collective of nonpartisan civic engagement agencies to increase their impact. Partners include the Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition, Citizens' Climate Lobby, Faith Action Network, Junior League of Yakima, La Casa Hogar, Latino Community Fund, NAACP - Yakima Branch, Nuestra Casa, OIC of Washington, Poder Latinx, Valley Alliance, Washington Conservation Action. Snohomish also partners with a number of diverse organizations who work with immigrant populations: Washington Family Engagement, Washington State Coalition of African Community Leaders, tabling during the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration event.

Skagit County has identified community events in a predominately Hispanic neighborhood, including a spring and fall Community Fair with booths and celebration. The League has a booth at these events which offers voter information and registration. Materials are provided in both Spanish and English and whenever possible, the League has attempted to enlist younger, bilingual members of the community to staff the booth with them. The League also participates in meetings of the Community Action Agency, which sponsors a Latino Advisory Committee. Skagit provides information about their upcoming events in English and in Spanish.

Naturalization and Voter Registration

A number of Leagues in areas that have naturalization ceremonies reach out to the new citizens to register them as voters. Benton and Franklin League, for example, registers voters at the

services held in Richland about three times per year. Clark has partnered with LWV Portland to register voters at two naturalization ceremonies (500 people each) held at the Portland Expo Center. Seattle/King registers new citizens at naturalization ceremonies each month. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) puts together a calendar each month. Seattle King County does not always get all the dates requested each month. Other Leagues mentioned that getting information from the USCIS about naturalization ceremonies can sometimes be difficult.

Leagues register voters at events that include those they believe are naturalized citizens, usually based on the native language. North King County registered voters at the International Community Health Service (ICHS) Lunar New Year 5K run/walk on February 25, 2024. Kittitas routinely does outreach to APOYO food bank clients with voter registration and voter information in Spanish. Clark has a voter registration table at the annual Multicultural Fair. Benton and Franklin League registers voters at schools, the local community college, places of worship (i.e. the local mosque), and immigrant-owned businesses

Some Leagues reach out to immigrants and their families to share civics information that may be of value to them. Yakima, for example, supplied *The State We Are In: Washington* in Spanish to both local citizenship organizations and 16 libraries. San Juan distributed the Spanish language book to Spanish speakers expressing interest in the work of the League at the county fair. Some Leagues have advocated for the translation of voting materials into languages other than English, including Yakima and Benton and Franklin. Although the Spokane League did not participate in the survey, one of its members related the League's own efforts to translate the ballot for language groups that were too small to merit official translations under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. A number of Leagues also introduce naturalized voters to the VOTE411.org website, including Jefferson, Benton and Franklin, Skagit. Yakima and Skagit also reach out to naturalized citizens to attend its Voter Forums.

Recruitment of Immigrants and Naturalized Citizens into the League

While there is outreach to immigrants and naturalized citizens, there is little effort among Leagues to recruit them as members. More than 90% of responses to a question specifically about recruitment of League members from this population were negative. Yakima is discussing this issue as part of its DEI planning.

Meetings, Forums, Programs of Work

About a third of the Leagues have organized meetings, forums or events around immigration policy or issues. Kitsap has done a series of events called "Voices in the Community" and panel discussions on immigration. Tacoma Pierce organized a forum on federal immigration policy in 2019 and a forum on new immigrants as part of a series on racism in 2021. Benton and Franklin hosted a Table Talk featuring a speaker from World Relief who brought a refugee family from Syria to talk about their experiences in a refugee camp and resettlement in the Tri-Cities. A speaker from B5, an organization that delivers educational classes and after-school programs for refugee families, spoke at another event. In preparation for this study, the San Juan league held a meeting focused on the economic, social, linguistic, and civic integration of immigrants in

San Juan County. The speakers included the SJ County Sheriff, point person on Latinx issues at the Family Resource Center, and the principal of the Friday Harbor high school.

About a third of Leagues asked questions about immigration issues at their Candidate Forums. Benton and Franklin reported the most questions asked of candidates for federal, state and local offices. The questions addressed a wide range of issues. Some pertained to federal policies including support for a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented; training that law enforcement officers received from border agents; separation of immigrant families; reduction in legal immigration; and admission of Syrian refugees to the United States. Local candidates were asked how immigrants could be supported and defended in their community; how candidates would ensure that immigrant children are treated fairly in our schools; what more could be done in the local school curriculum to include the perspective of immigrants; and a host of other questions related to DEI. Tacoma Pierce has asked questions about language justice (especially in school board elections), access to health care, and the detention center in Tacoma. Yakima asked questions about how to ensure diversity and inclusiveness in departments, boards, and committees, noting the large number of non-white and Latinx residents, many of whom are immigrants or of immigrant backgrounds. Snohomish asked U.S. Congressional candidates what changes to the immigration system, if any, would they support or propose. Judicial candidates were asked what role judges can play in mitigating the impact of any implicit bias in the judicial system.

Only a quarter of local Leagues have provided legislative updates on policies related to immigration or immigrants to their members. Benton and Franklin has shared legislative updates on the DREAM Act with members. San Juan has covered LWVUS positions and advocacy on immigration issues in their monthly Voter newsletter. These have included the League's position on DACA, among other issues. Several Leagues commented that they routinely push all action alerts from LWVWA, which sometimes includes action on immigration bills. Yakima opined that this was “definitely something that should be added.”

Partnerships

About 25% of the Leagues have partnered with a refugee or immigration agency that operates in Washington state. Yakima partners with La Casa Hogar, Latino Community Fund, Nuestra Casa, Poder Latinx, Valley Alliance, Washington Conservation Action, We are Ella, and One America.

The Jefferson League works with JCIRA Multicultural Center while Kitsap’s League has partnered with the Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center with whom it sponsored a panel discussion on immigration issues. Benton and Franklin League does not have formal partnerships but a few of their members work with World Relief and provide updates on their work and needs. Other Benton and Franklin members volunteer with B5, and one member speaks Pashto and works with Afghani refugees. San Juan partners with the Family Resource Center, which has programs for the Latinx community, including immigrants.

Conclusion

About two-thirds of the local Leagues indicated interest in finding ways to connect with immigrant organizations and liked the idea of welcoming immigrants to their communities. As Snohomish stated, “While this has not been an emphasis for us, we are interested and willing to embrace the work going forward.” Jefferson noted that the survey “is a great reminder that we need to make sure JCIRA feels like a full partner in what we do.” Several Leagues listed the issues they would like to pursue, including voter education, registration, translation services, and DACA.

Scarcity of resources is a barrier, however, for local Leagues. As the Skagit League noted, “We are interested in finding ways to better connect with the Latino, Ukrainian, and Russian populations in Skagit County but our bandwidth is limited. To date we haven't identified someone who has the capacity and resources to figure out how we can accomplish this.” Partnerships with immigrant organizations were repeatedly cited as an important component of past and future activities for the local Leagues.

7. Conclusions

The study team heard repeatedly in interviews about immigrants' desire to work, to start businesses, to innovate, to support their family, and to provide a better future for their children. Immigrants benefit the economy in several ways; they are more likely to be of working age and be employed than the native born; they pay taxes; they contribute to economic growth through their consumption of goods and service; and rather than substitute for domestic labor, they tend to specialize in labor that complements native born labor (East 2024). For example, immigrants are prevalent as housekeepers, cooks, and in childcare; their labor expands the jobs available for native born workers to work in more lucrative jobs in the hospitality/restaurant industry, as well as being able to work because childcare is more affordable.

The study team also heard about obstacles facing immigrants: getting work authorization in a timely manner, getting their professional credentials recognized in the U.S., learning English, finding interpreters, making it through the complicated maze of immigration law, accessing health and social services, finding shelter, obtaining legal representation, and applying for a secure immigration status and, ultimately, citizenship.

The good news is that the Washington legislature and the administration want to help. A wide array of legislation has been enacted in the past decades to welcome immigrants. The Attorney General's office has litigated when the safety of immigrants, as well as the interests of the state in reaping the benefits of immigration, are at stake. Other agencies within the state government have also taken action to include immigrants in their planning and programs.

As discussed in section 5, there are also many non-governmental organizations throughout the state who work with and for immigrants. None has the capacity, however, to do this work for all immigrants in the state, let alone address all of the comprehensive needs of immigrants. Hence each immigrant family is too often left to find its own path. The study team heard repeatedly about the need to have one stop for resources for immigrants. Otherwise, it is difficult for immigrants to find the resources they need because information, services, and programs are fragmented, and organizations working with immigrants are often able to focus only on one service, like legal assistance, education, or labor rights. Over and over again the study team also heard about the need for advocates and navigators to assist with bureaucracy, language, and culture.

A lack of adequate financial resources and personnel is a further impediment. Apple Health Expansion is a case in point. Legislation now allows immigrants to receive benefits, regardless of status, but only 13,000 immigrants benefited because the program was not fully funded. Another example is that school districts are encouraged by state law to prioritize a multilingual approach to help English language learners and English-speaking children, but many jurisdictions have too few trained teachers and too little funding to implement the program.

There is already considerable advocacy to fix some of the problems in the current system. Our interviewees described efforts their own organizations are making, as discussed in section 5

and Appendix 2. Many of these groups are immigrant and refugee led, which make them effective spokespersons. They do not have the resources and expertise, however, to reach legislators throughout the state. A number of our interviewees talked of the need for a more systematic and holistic approach. The challenges facing immigrants are interconnected. For example, lack of legal representation affects legal immigrant status which in turn affects employment and access to services, and so on.

The Immigration Study Committee identified 12 areas of concern impeding the ability of the state to achieve its intended goals in welcoming immigrants and to responding to ever increasing challenges. These are pertinent in developing a potential LWVWA position and advocacy policy on welcoming immigrants:

1. Countering xenophobia, discrimination against immigrants, and extreme anti-immigration rhetoric.
2. Need to litigate federal policies that harm immigrants and undermine the benefits accruing to Washington from a safe and orderly immigration process at the federal level.
3. Funding to ensure greater access to legal representation for immigrants in removal proceedings as well as those applying for citizenship, legal permanent residence, asylum, TPS, or other legal immigration status.
4. Provisions by state and local governments to provide accessible services to all residents, regardless of immigration status.
5. Need for a holistic approach to providing immigrants with services that takes into account the interconnected challenges that they face.
6. Coordination amongst the state agencies that interact with immigrants and refugees.
7. Working conditions for immigrants, particularly those in low-income jobs.
8. Access to health and mental health services for immigrants, regardless of their immigration status.
9. Delays in issuance of work permits, advocating the use of ITINs to access state services, exploring the legality of issuance of work permits or provisional work authorization, elimination or reduction in fees, and streamlining of the overall process.
10. Funding of programs to ensure greater access to English language classes, civics education, naturalization preparation, and interpretation/translation services for immigrants.
11. Closure of private detention centers, such as Northwest ICE Processing Center; immediate reforms to ensure the safety and well-being of those who are detained; and abolition of detention of asylum-seekers, except for purposes of establishing identity.
12. Implementation and efficacy of existing legislation and policies aimed at assisting, protecting and welcoming immigrants.

In addition, the study points to best practices that the LWVWA and local leagues can adopt to help welcome immigrants and refugees. These include:

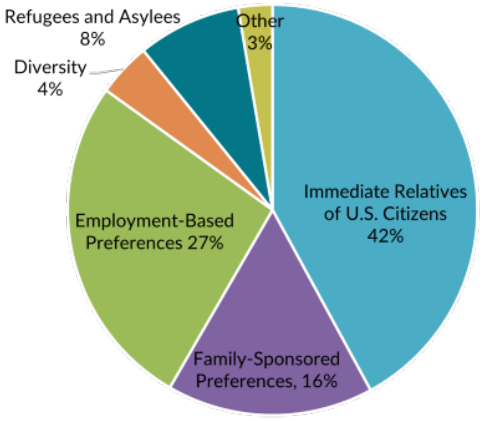
1. Reaching out proactively to immigrants to learn more about their needs.

2. Forming partnerships at the state and local levels with immigrant led and immigrant serving organizations to advocate for needed reforms.
3. Enhancing efforts to help immigrants naturalize, focusing in particular on civics education.
4. Enhancing voter registration programs to include the newly naturalized, naturalized citizens new to the state, and those who never registered anywhere.
5. Translating election ballots into languages not covered under state or federal law.
6. Holding forums to help naturalized citizens understand the voting process in Washington state, as it may be very different from what happened in their home country
7. Circulating the Leagues' civic education books to immigrants and naturalized citizens.
8. Sponsoring refugees for resettlement through the Welcome Corps.

Appendix 1: Admission of Immigrants

Immigrants are admitted for legal permanent residence (LPR) as established in the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA), as revised in 1990. About 1 million LPRs are admitted each year. There are several avenues through which LPRs are granted status (Figure 7). The visas are designated for 1) **Family Sponsored** (unlimited numbers for spouses, minor children and parents of US citizens; limited numbers (226,000) for adult children and siblings as well as spouses and minor children of LPRs); 2) **Employment Sponsored** (140,000 visas, mostly for people with a BA degree or higher); 3) **Diversity visas** (55,000) for people coming from countries that have few citizens admitted to the U.S. and 4) **Humanitarian visas**, including refugees, those granted asylum in the country and others with humanitarian needs. The President sets the number of refugees to be admitted each year after consultation with Congress; the number of asylees depends on conditions in home countries, processing capabilities and deterrence measures. Refugees and those granted asylum are eligible to adjust to LPR status after one year of residence.

Figure 7. U.S. Admission of LPRs by Status



Source: Migration Policy Institute 2024

Because the number of persons applying for LPR status greatly exceeds the numerical limits, there are backlogs in processing applications. Moreover, there are per-country limits: No country of origin can account for more than 7 percent of the total annual number of family-and employment-based visas (about 25,600 visas). There are about 3.9 million family-sponsored applicants and about 168,000 employment-sponsored ones awaiting final decisions. In March 2024, the State Department was processing cases for family reunification filed in September 1998 (Batalov 2024).

A second group of immigrants entering the country are designated nonimmigrants in the law. They enter temporarily for purposes of tourism, business, employment, study, investment, marriage. A number of nonimmigrant visas are also available to admit diplomats, staff of international organizations, the foreign crew of aircrafts and ships, journalists, cultural

exchange, among others. Victims of human trafficking and certain crimes qualify for visas if they agree to testify against the perpetrators. Nonimmigrant visa holders are not generally eligible to adjust to LPR status although some statuses—particularly those for skilled professionals and managers— allow entry with dual intent, i.e. to remain in the U.S. or return home.

Table 2. Nonimmigrants by Category of Admission

Category of Temporary Admission	Number of Admissions	Share of Total
TOTAL	**44,898,000**	**100.0%**
Tourists	34,946,000	77.8%
Temporary Visitors for Business	4,235,000	9.4%
Temporary Workers and Families	3,177,000	7.1%
Students and Families	1,264,000	2.8%
Exchange Visitors	432,000	1.0%
Transit Admissions	447,000	1.0%
Diplomats and Other Representatives	331,000	0.7%
Fiancé(e) and Child Admissions	26,000	0.1%
Other	39,000	0.1%

Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2024

There are a number of other legal humanitarian statuses permitting temporary legal entry and stays that are defined in the INA. For example, the INA states that "Any alien who is physically present in the United States or who arrives in the United States (whether or not at a designated port of arrival and including an alien who is brought to the United States after having been interdicted in international or United States waters), irrespective of such alien's status, may apply for asylum…. (INA 2019)." Also by legislation, certain immigrants are eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) if they are in the U.S. and cannot return to their home countries because of conflict or natural disasters. Humanitarian parole is a further status detailed in the INA-- "individuals who are outside of the United States may be able to request parole into the United States based on urgent humanitarian or significant public benefit reasons." None of these statuses is a pathway to permanent resident status. Rather, people are allowed to remain in the country unless conditions in their countries change, they become eligible for other pathways to LPR status, or Congress passes legislation enabling them to adjust their status (which has happened previously). They are granted work authorization but cannot sponsor their families for admission.

The INA refers to other immigrants as illegal aliens[10]. This includes persons who enter without authorization, overstay their visa, or work in violation of their permission to enter. The legislation gives authority to the government to take actions to apprehend, detain and remove

[10] The use of the terms "illegal alien" is antiquated and offensive but remains the official designation of certain categories of immigrants in the Immigration and Nationalities Act. It is used in the report only when referring specifically to that legislation.

these individuals. It also authorizes the government to apprehend, detain and remove persons who commit certain crimes, including legal permanent residents, regardless of when the crime was committed.

Appendix 2: Efforts by Washington Organizations to Welcome Immigrants

This appendix provides additional information about organizations in Washington that serve immigrants. It comes from interviews, group meetings, and internet searches. It supplements the information provided in Chapter 5.

Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest (AIDNW) is a 501(c)(3) that provides services to immigrants in detention at NWIPC and upon release. Services include visitation and letter writing, phone funds, clothing and personal care items for those released or deported, and assistance with travel arrangements upon release.

Community to Community is dedicated to promoting the wellbeing of farm workers, many of whom are immigrants. They educate and organize farm workers who are not covered under normal labor laws, which exclude agricultural labor. Their goals are to improve working conditions, pay, and benefits of farmworkers. One of the chief challenges they are facing to achieve this is that large farms have begun using more foreign contract workers as a means of union busting. The local Washington farm workers tend to have been here for generations and are highly skilled in the work they do. Large farms argue they need foreign contract labor because there is a farmworker shortage. Community to Community stated that there is no worker shortage, only an unwillingness to pay higher wages and allow workers to organize (*Juarez 2024*).

Community to Community encourages immigrant participation as precinct committee officers (PCOs) or assistants to PCOs, they sponsor an annual lobby day at the state legislature to advocate for policies to support farmworkers, support farmworker unionization, and educate immigrants about the role of unions. They sponsor lobbying efforts in Olympia during the legislative session (*Guillen 2024; Reyes 2024*). They advocate for increasing Applecare funding, affordable housing and rental assistance, hazard pay for farmworkers, and stemming the use of H2-A visas which displace local farmworkers. These efforts bring immigrants and their supporters to the state capitol to speak with their local representatives to advocate for legislation to assist immigrants. In meetings with legislators and staff they tell their personal stories in support of legislation. Community to Community provides interpreters so that immigrants can tell their stories in their own language. The impact is not just on the legislatures and their support for legislation, it also empowers immigrants by involving them in the political process.

Community and Technical Colleges Durden (*2024*) described Washington state's 29 community colleges and 5 technical colleges as, "entry points…. All offer basic education, workforce prep and transfer degrees. All have an English language program and immigrants can start at any level. We have good options for language learners who then transfer to secondary level credential then industry-recognized credential." However, the demand for classes exceeds the supply, and cost is often a barrier for many immigrants.

A particularly innovative approach is Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST). It teaches ELL students literacy, work, and college-readiness skills at the same time (*Durden 2024*). The aim is to allow students to move through school and into living wage jobs faster (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. 2024). "I-BEST uses a team-teaching approach. Students work with two teachers in the classroom: one provides job-training and the other teaches basic skills in reading, math or English language. Students get the help they need while studying in the career field of their choice; they learn by doing (*Durden 2024*)."

Interpretation and Translation Services are provided by a range of government and non-profit services. For example, Refugee and Immigrant Services NorthWest (RISNW) provides such services in the Snohomish area, with funding from the state government. The interpreters are certified or authorized by DSHS for medical and social services. RISNW coordinates and schedules on-call interpretation services for the county's school districts and local businesses. They draw from a pool of 137 interpreters and translators who speak 40 languages and dialects (Refugee and Immigrant Services NorthWest 2024).

The Health Care Authority (HCA) provides interpretation for Apple Health clients who need assistance during their health care services. HCA has signed a contract with Universal Language Service to provide over the phone and video remote interpreting services. Health care providers can arrange for interpretation for individual clients or a block of time for interpretation for multiple clients (Washington State Health Care Authority 2024b). Washington State Department of Labor and Industries has a similar arrangement with WordBridge to provide interpretation services for those with open and allowed L&I claims (Washington State Department of Labor and Industries 2024).

King County Department of Community and Human Services**,** Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) can support VSHSL-funded entities in translating program materials and providing interpreter services to VSHSL clients at no cost to the provider or client (King County Department of Community and Human Services 2024). Counties also arrange for interpretation at court hearings. For example, the Superior Court for Benton and Franklin Counties obtains interpreters to assist non-English speakers with court matters. The counties caution that "When scheduling an interpreter for trial, parties and participants should submit their request for an interpreter two weeks prior to their scheduled trial date. All trials, lasting ½ day or longer, require two interpreters. In cases of less commonly spoken languages, … it generally takes longer to locate and schedule certified or qualified interpreters (County of Benton 2024)."

Hospitals handle interpretation and translation services in different ways. For example, the in-house Harborview Interpreter Services department seeks to "contribute to the elimination of health care disparities experienced by limited English proficient and the hearing impaired populations who receive care at Harborview Medical Center by "providing effective interpretation services in response to a continuum of need; maintaining partnerships with patients, families, communities, providers and staff that promote culturally competent care; and making information about culture, health, illness and community resources available to health care providers who see refugee and immigrant patients (Harborview Medical Center 2024)." The department offers free medical interpretation by accredited interpreters in more

than 80 languages and dialects (Harborview Medical Center 2024). By contrast, Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane arranges for face-to-face and video interpretation through its Case Management/Social Work Services department. For immediate needs, the hospital has placed 'Telelanguage Med Pat' phones in all service areas (Sacred Heart Medical Center 2024).

La Resistencia is a grassroots organization led by undocumented immigrants and people of color working to end the detention of immigrants and stop deportations. Originally founded in March 7th 2014 to support a hunger strike launched by over 1200 people detained in Tacoma to protest their confinement, La Resistencia began under the umbrella of the national #Not1More campaign as "NWDC Resistance." Today, La Resistencia is led by those that have been detained or have had relatives in deportation proceedings. They support and engage with people detained at the Northwest Detention Center who organize and protest against the detention and deportation regime. Their goal is to shut down the NWIPC, and to end all detentions and deportations in Washington state.

Libraries play a role as well in teaching adults with limited English skills. Libraries throughout the state also provide classes and activities for adult ELL. They fall into several categories. Some libraries offer Basic and Beginning ESL Classes to adults on a regular schedule. For example, the Renton library has classes every Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30-4pm, excluding holidays (King County Library System 2024). Students do not need to register, just show up at the library. Auburn also has classes twice a week but requires registration (King County Library System 2024).

Other libraries have informal opportunities to learn English. Bothell, Fairwood, Shoreline, and others provide "Talk Time: English Conversation" programs to help ELLs to "practice speaking English with other English language learners. Learn about American culture and meet people from around the world (King County Library System 2024)." In an online program hosted by the King County library system, teen volunteers lead activities that help students practice English conversation. It focuses on Grades K-5 and 6-12. Libraries also provide free access to other online resources for learning a second language, such as Pronunciator (Spokane) or Mango Languages (Yakima Valley). Sno-Isle Libraries have compiled a list of ESL classes within their catchment area (Snohomish Libraries 2024). Libraries also offer bilingual events that allow Spanish-only and other ELL's to participate. For example, the mid-Columbia libraries offer bilingual stories, songs, and activities in English and Spanish for families with children (Mid-Columbia Libraries 2024).

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the largest and oldest Hispanic organization in the United States. Their mission is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civic rights of Hispanic Americans. LULAC is a national organization with councils throughout the county. There are four councils in Washington state. LULAC organizes workshops promoting civic involvement and advocates legislative agendas. The Tri-cities LULAC council is involved in and supports the major programs that work with immigrants.

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) is an important source of legal representation for immigrants. Their impact litigation plays a particularly pivotal role in protecting the rights of

immigrants and refugees. This work “has helped fight racial profiling by border patrol officials in the Olympic Peninsula, secured the right to an attorney for mentally ill immigrants facing deportation, and ensured that immigrants are considered for conditional parole from detention when they qualify (NWIRP 2024).” NWIRP also does "Know Your Rights" presentations in Spanish that discuss what to do when confronted by a police officer or immigration officials. NWIRP's Tacoma office provides limited legal assistance to detainees at the Northwest Detention Center. With funds from the U.S. Department of Justice, NWIRP’s Legal Orientation Program provides “group orientations that inform detainees about their legal rights, their legal options, and about what they can expect when they appear in court as well as individual orientations and workshops to unrepresented detainees (NWIRP 2024).”

NWIRP established a unit to support clients needing social services so that their legal advocates could focus on legal issues. They also educate immigrants about who can vote and who cannot as well as who can contribute to political campaigns. This preventive action helps ensure that immigrants do not mistakenly commit criminal acts (*Chavez 2024*). NWIRP also assists immigrants with family visa applications and represents family members facing deportation. It also files applications before United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”) for children and youth who have been abandoned, abused or neglected by one or both parents and may be eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status that allows them to remain in the country and eventually become permanent residents. They also help children and their parents apply for asylum if they fear harm or persecution in their home countries (NWIRP 2024). There are limited funds, however, for these programs (*Chavez 2024*).

The Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO), Seattle Field Office, is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). OIDO “focuses on preserving the rights of detained people and ensuring immigration detention is safe and humane by addressing staff or contractor misconduct; violations of law, detention standards, contract terms, or policy related to immigration detention; and uses of excessive force (OIDO 2024).” OIDO relies on complaints from detainees and others as well as reports from field staff to identify abuses and make efforts to address problems. In 2023, most complaints received nationwide were related to facility environment (3761 complaints), contact and communication (3253) and medical treatment (2435) (OIDO 2024). Over a two-year period, OIDO received 535 complaints about the Tacoma facility (Nitsch 2024). The ombudsman’s office does not have direct control over the detention facilities and cannot require ICE and CBP to make changes. Persuasion works in some instances, however; for example, ICE agreed to loosen provisions at NWIPC regarding religious visitations at OIDO’s request (Nitch 2024).

Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) is part of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. Its goal is to help refugee and immigrant families succeed in Washington state. The agency funds a number of programs for refugees and a more limited number for immigrants. Its programs fall into several categories: Basic Needs Assistance, Employment and Training, Health and Wellness, Immigration Assistance, and Naturalization Services.

The LEP Pathway program "assists eligible refugees and immigrants, including those receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash and Refugee Cash Assistance benefits to move towards economic stability (ORIA 2024b). Services include coaching, case management and workshops to help clients prepare for and search for jobs. This includes help for job seekers in "resume writing, interviewing skills, employer expectations and using the internet to search for work (ORIA 2024b)." ORIA also funds programs to improve work skills in a specific industry, such as those needed to receive a commercial driver's license or culinary skills apprenticeships.

ORIA also implements a program called Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET), based on a statewide Washington program aimed at recipients of SNAP (food stamps) assistance. The ORIA version offers the same services "with a focus on providing culturally and linguistically appropriate employment and training services to refugees and immigrants (ORIA 2024c). Eligibility is limited to those who are 16 years or older, a federal food recipient, a refugee or immigrant, not a U.S. citizen and not receiving TANF or Refugee Cash Assistance from the state. A separate program, called Food Assistance Program Employment and Training (FAP) provides similar services to those who are receiving benefits from the Washington state food assistance program. are at least 16 years old, and are not receiving state Family Assistance, TANF or Refugee Cash Assistance.

A further ORIA program, the Career Ladder for Educated and/or Vocationally Experienced Refugees program (CLEVER), focuses on refugees who hope to re-enter their career fields (ORIAd). Services include career orientation, career planning, credential evaluation, assistance with licensing and recertification, and job placement that is targeted to an individual's field of expertise. The program is a collaboration between ORIA and nonprofit organizations that provide services directly to refugees. Clients must have lived in the United States for less than 60 months; have not yet naturalized, have a professional background, have an immigration status making them eligible for federally-funded refugee services. ORIA partners with Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Partners in Careers, Highline College, TRAC Associates, Diocese of Olympia, Volunteers of America Western Washington, Career Path Services, and the International Rescue Committee (ORIAd 2024).

ORIA also provides support for ESL classes. For example, RISNW offers ESL classes through a partnership with Everett and Edmonds Community Colleges. World Relief has both online and in-person English classes. The World Relief Bellingham program is more intensive than some of the other programs, with students attending four in-person classes per week. However, the classes are during the work day and World Relief does not provide childcare (World Relief 2024). World Relief's classes are free and have open enrollment, so new students do not have to wait to get started. However, students must go to a World Relief office to complete a pretest at the start of each quarter.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) oversees numerous programs for limited English-speaking students. It established several advisory groups to help it formulate policies and programs. These include the Bilingual Education Advisory Committee (BEAC) to "serve as an advisory committee to the Superintendent of Public Instruction on matters related to policy, effective programming, and resource allocations for English learners in Washington's schools. (Washington OSPI 2024c)." OSPI charged the Language Access Advisory Committee

(LAAC) with “guiding, monitoring, and making recommendations regarding improving meaningful, equitable access for public school students and their family members who have language access barriers (Washington OSPI 2024c). Although not specific to immigrants, the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee was created to address the achievement gap of minorities in Washington state and has mandatory representation by the Asian American and Hispanic American communities.

OneAmerica represents four organizations that focus on different aspects of civic engagement. The original body, OneAmerica, is a 501(c)(3) home for building immigrant power for collective change; OneAmerica Votes is a non-partisan 501(c)(4) organization promoting democracy and building power in immigrant and refugee communities through advocacy, civic engagement, and leadership development; OneAmerica Votes Justice Fund is a state political action committee working to elect immigrant and refugee candidates like us in Washington state: and OAV Justice For All PAC is a federal political action committee working to elect immigrant and refugee candidates like us in Congress (One America 2024). The work of One America falls into four areas that cover most of the issues raised in this report. They include civic engagement, organizing, policy and campaigns and a just immigration system for all. The civics engagement component includes training of immigrants to run for political office; building and educating an immigrant voter base by registering and mobilizing immigrants to vote; and holding elected leaders to account for how they govern, and advancing “big, bold changes to our immigration, education and democratic systems (One America 2024). As Eli Goss (*2024*) relayed in his interview, the aim is to show those training for public office or advocating big ideas “the world as it is and the world we want it to be.”

In addition, One America, in cooperation with the state of Washington, founded the Washington New Americans Program (WNA) to provide information and legal services that immigrants needed “to successfully naturalize and exercise their civic voice WNA 2024).” They also “advocate to reduce the structural barriers that keep many from achieving U.S. citizenship (WNA 2024).” Legal help is provided by the American Immigration Lawyers Association and community organizations. The aim is to provide naturalization information and assistance with the various forms that must be submitted to naturalize. WNA organizes free citizenship application workshops about 12 times per year.

OneAmerica’s current advocacy focuses on dual language programs, legal services, access to government services that are not based on status, and, particularly, access to affordable childcare (*Goss 2024*). They note that with more than 30 different immigration statuses there is a great deal of confusion about access to government services and fear by immigrants that they might violate the public charge mandate; they would like to see a one-stop agency, an Office of New Americans, where immigrants could seek assistance for their needs. Goss noted that the legal costs of naturalization are a barrier for over 140,000 Washingtonians eligible for citizenship, and that this adds to the precariousness of their situation. Goss also noted that Washington state is a leader in promoting civic engagement of immigrants through its Voting Rights Act and language access on ballots.

Along with lobbying for state legislation, One America trains immigrants to get them involved in local politics. This is particularly important as the influence of immigrants in civic life in

Washington state is not yet proportional in terms of composition of politicians, government staffing, school boards, PCOs, let alone reflective in policies, programs, laws, and government spending. With immigrants comprising 15.3% of the state's population (US Census Bureau 2024a), one would expect to see at least one in seven of these people in all aspects of civic life to be immigrants. As an example, while there does not appear to be data on the immigrant composition of the state legislature, only 4% of Washington state legislators are Hispanic and 6.8% are Asian (NCLS 2023) as compared to 14% and 10% of the population, respectively (US Census 2022). That immigrants are not in positions of political and civic power in proportion to their population calls into question whether their interests can be adequately addressed.

Puget Sound Welcome Back Center, Highline College addresses the certification of immigrant professionals. Its goal is to build "bridges between the pool of internationally trained professionals living in Washington and the need for linguistically and culturally competent professional services. Its goal is to assist these professionals to make the best use of their professional skills through respectful, innovative, and individualized career counseling and educational services (Highline College 2024)." According to Will Durden (*2024*), Director of Basic Education for Adults, this model should be duplicated throughout the state.

Refugee and Immigrant Health Program (RIHP) oversees the healthcare needs of resettled refugees and others eligible under federal law (such as Afghans and Ukrainians admitted through humanitarian parole). RIHP, with ORIA, for ensuring that refugees receive health screenings within 90 days of arrival. Resettled refugees have an initial screening before departing for the U.S. According to the website, "the domestic medical screening provides clinicians with an opportunity to follow-up on or identify new health concerns that may hinder successful resettlement and self-sufficiency, to promote wellbeing, and to connect refugees with routine and specialty care (Refugee and Immigrant Health Program 2024)." These screenings take place at clinics in Benton-Franklin, Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane counties.

Refugee Resettlement Agencies enter "into a grant, contract or cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of State to provide for the reception and initial placement of refugees (Washington State Department of Social and Health Services 2019)." Resettlement agencies operating in Washington include Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), the Diocese of Olympia, Jewish Family Services, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Community Services NW, and World Relief. They provide services, including reception of refugees at the airport, cultural orientation, shelter, furniture for their apartment, help with rent, food and clothing, medical screening, enrollment of children in school and adults in language and social service programs operated by the state (Episcopal Migration Ministries 2024), International Rescue Committee 2024, Diocese of Olympia 2024, World Relief 2024). Some resettlement agencies provide, as stated by Seattle's Jewish Family Service (2024), "comprehensive, long-term case management to refugee and asylum seekers who face additional barriers to stability including single-parent households, members of the LGTBQI community, and those with complex medical and mental health needs." Lutheran Community Services Northwest has a refugee and immigrant counseling program. Among the services provided are outpatient individual and group counseling for adults aged 18 and older and treatment for those exposed to trauma,

particularly torture survivors. Services are available in person or via telehealth (Lutheran Community Services Northwest 2024).

Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) services are "designed to quickly and effectively stabilize clients, promote acculturation, increase language proficiency, and improve employability (ReWa 2024)." The principal services include ESL classes, employment and job training, housing assistance, behavioral health counseling, citizenship and immigration legal services, domestic violence support, and childcare support (ReWA 2024). In addition, ReWA advocates for "social justice, public policy changes, and equal access to services while respecting cultural values and the right to self-determination (ReWA 2024).

With regard to gender-based violence, ReWA provides numerous services, assistance with applying for protection orders, developing safety plans, and accessing safe shelters; helping refugee women understand and navigate the legal system; family law services, including separation and divorce; support groups; mental health counseling and consultation; educational training to service providers and law enforcement agencies. referral to community resources for survivors of crime, domestic violence and sexual assault; and an after-hours helpline. ReWA caseworkers also provide assistance to clients who cannot find affordable housing or need emergency assistance to pay rent and utilities (ReWA 2024).

San Juan County's Board of Directors of the San Juan Island School District adopted a policy to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, to communicate with parents in their native language, and to provide language and cultural training to teachers, counselors and staff (San Juan Island School District 2024). The district would like to do more to help immigrant children with limited English fluency but resources are already strained. The entire K-12 school system has only one certified ESL teacher although other teachers have received training in working with this population.

As with other school districts, San Juan County has implemented strategies to help newcomer students and others with limited English. A partnership with the local Family Resource Center has helped the schools to address the needs of immigrant students. The high school established a Latinx Club, where limited English students are able to get peer assistance in navigating the school system. The principal, who is fluent in Spanish, has served as the club's faculty mentor in order to listen and learn about the concerns of students and take action, if possible, to correct the problems (*Hillman 2024*). The school has also supported the participation of students in activities sponsored by the Latino/a Educational Achievement Project, a statewide program in Washington that aims to improve the academic performance of Latino students (*Hillman 2024*). In addition, the district has programs to help immigrant students obtain scholarships if they want to pursue higher education.

Spokane Public School System's (SPS) approach to programs for English Language Learners (ELLs) has evolved as state and federal laws and funding mechanisms have changed. The Office of English Language Development's (ELD) charge is to help ELLs develop language proficiency so they can become socially and academically successful in school. Students registering with SPS who indicate that English is not their first language are referred to ELD. They are given the WIDA Screener, a placement exam to determine eligibility for the ELD program within 10 days

of the student's entry into the school district. Then, a development plan is established for the student. If the child speaks no English, they are assigned for up to one year to newcomer centers that serve children from grades 3-12 with foundational literacy and to help them bridge cultural divides. If they speak some English, they may be pulled out of class so teachers can help them become more fluent in English or learn subject matter materials in their native language. The school district supports multi-and dual-language programs that result in bilingual graduates, a skill that is useful in work settings (*Richardson 2024*). To assist parents, SPS provides information about school policies and programs in 11 languages, ranging from French, Spanish and Russian to Karen, Kinyarwanda, and Nepali.

Tacoma Pro Bono is a 501(c)(3) that provides free civil legal aid to low-income clients in Pierce County. They have a staff of lawyers and paralegals and coordinate pro bono legal assistance through a network of attorney volunteers. They focus on housing and family law and safety issues and also serve a limited number of people detained at NWIPC.

Thrive International has offices in Spokane and Seattle. As its name implies, Thrive aims to ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers are able to thrive, not just survive. The Women's Empowerment program is primarily focused on community building. The organization provides "driving courses, Monthly Tea Time (with presentations from service providers around Spokane and fun games and prizes), weekly free Zumba Class, weekly simple artwork, weekly beading classes…. [Thrive] provides childcare during gatherings so that women can focus on the program without being burdened to take care of their children during the programs (Thrive International 2024a)." These types of programs are essential, as one of our interviewees put it, because there is a need for immigrants and refugees to have places to meet each other, share experiences, and provide a safe environment for children to play (*Eastern Washington University 2024*). Thrives' Mahima Project combines employment training with activities that help traumatized women recover (Thrive International 2024b). The staff for these programs are mostly immigrants and refugees themselves, and are skilled resource coordinators, have experience in navigating the US immigration system, and speak the native languages of the clients (*CastroLang 2024*).

Tri-Cities Immigration Coalition (TCIC) is a community-based volunteer non-profit group that came together in 2017 with the goal of assisting immigrants and refugees in the Tri-Cities area. The coalition's aims are to educate the community about immigration rights, laws, and services; engage and network with individuals, groups, and agencies related to immigrants and immigration issues; provide opportunities for a diverse community to come together, advocate for immigrants with factual information; and support and assist immigrants to access resources (Tri-Cities Immigration Coalition 2024).

Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce provides culturally and linguistically assistance and business support services at no cost to entrepreneurs, small business owners, and non-profit organizations. They focus on businesses owned by historically marginalized and underserved persons. They are part of a network of Hispanic Chambers of Commerce throughout Washington state.

Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN) is a grassroots organization that brings together immigrant and refugee organizations from across the state. As one opens their website, the banner announces the aim of the organization in capital letters: “BUILDING IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE POWER IN WASHINGTON STATE (WAISN 2024).” The mission is to “protect and advance the power of immigrant and refugee communities through a multiracial, multilingual, and multi-faith coalition. Our organizing strategy educates and mobilizes statewide to uphold and defend the rights and dignity of all immigrants and refugees, centering the voices of impacted communities (Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network. 2024).”

Immigrants have called on WAISN to promote legislation to assist immigrants because of the many challenges they face that are affected by government policies (*Reyes 2024*). These include the need for affordable housing, access to healthcare, legal aid, help in gaining work authorization and a more stable immigrant status, and ways to address anti-immigrant rhetoric.

WAISN has identified several actions that could address some of these concerns, including promoting the permanent expansion of AppleCare (Medicaid), supporting access to supportive programs for those without status, supporting newly arriving immigrants by asking for city and county fund, exploring how to counter anti-immigrant rhetoric, expanding the cost-free colleges benefit to include migrant. providing legal and other help to workers who have reported labor violations, wage theft, safety concerns, and providing access to professional licensure for immigrants.

Much of WAISN's advocacy work has focused on the Health Equity for Immigrants Campaign. The campaign includes community leaders, health care providers and advocates. It was endorsed by more than 100 organizations throughout the state. The aim is “to improve access to affordable health care and coverage for all Washington residents. Guided by a community-informed approach, we prioritize equitable access for individuals who are uninsured and underinsured due to immigration status restrictions” (WAISN 2024). The principal focus is education, identification of gaps in care and services, and policy and legislative initiatives to communicate health priorities of immigrants to elected officials and policymakers (WAISN 2024). The current priority is to enlarge the Apple Health Extension and make it permanent (*Reyes 2024*).

Appendix 3: Survey of Local Leagues in Washington State

Purpose of the Survey
The League of Women Voters WA is surveying Local Leagues in support of the Study on Welcoming Immigrants in Washington state. The study was approved as part of the Program of Work at the Convention in May 2023. The study team will be gathering information and interviewing stakeholders and officials during the next few months. The study team is particularly interested in learning more about projects that Local Leagues are doing to assist immigrants in preparing for citizenship, registering to vote, learning about the voting process in WA, and providing civics information and language assistance. The study team is also interested in learning about meetings, voter forums, and other activities that educate the broader community about issues affecting immigrants and the communities in which they live. You will see that you will be asked to elaborate on activities that apply specifically to immigrants in your community. The study team understands how valuable your time is and thank you in advance for filling out the survey and providing as much detail as possible. For more information, please contact Susan Martin, Chair of the Study Committee at pres.lwvsji@gmail.com.

Definitions:
"Naturalization" is the process by which a foreign citizen becomes a citizen of a new country. Once having gone through the naturalization process, the person is a naturalized citizen.

"Immigrants" refer to all foreign-born persons who reside in the United States, regardless of their legal status. This includes naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents, temporary workers, refugees, asylum-seekers, persons with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), humanitarian parole recipients, undocumented migrants, and others residing in the US for more than a few months.

Questions:
1. Name of Local League

2. Name of Local League Contact Person and Contact Information

3. Does your Local League reach out to immigrants in your community who may be interested in becoming U.S. citizens? If so, please provide examples of your outreach activities.

4. Does your Local League have targeted programs to help naturalized citizens register to vote? If yes, what do these programs do and how do you reach naturalized citizens -- at naturalization ceremonies, in schools, or at other venues?

5. If your Local League has special programs to help naturalized citizens to exercise their right to vote, please check all that apply and describe your programs in the comment box. If you do not have such programs, please go to Question 6.

a. Providing civics education programs on voting rights and voting processes in WA.

b. Joining litigation when the rights of naturalized citizens to vote are threatened on the basis of their race, nationality, gender, or other protected characteristics

c. Advocating for the translation of voting materials into languages other than English

d. Introducing naturalized voters to the VOTE411 .org website

e. Reaching out to naturalized citizens to attend Voter Forums

f. Other (please specify

6. Does your Local League have a special program for distributing LWVWA civics books (The State We're In: Washington @ https://lwvwa.org/books) in English or Spanish to immigrants and newly naturalized citizens and their families? If yes, please describe your efforts in comments box.

7. Does your Local League have a special effort or program to recruit naturalized citizens as members to your league? If so, please describe the effort or program and any success in recruiting naturalized citizens.

8. Has your Local League organized any meetings, forums or events around immigration policy or issues. If so, on what topics?

9. In your candidate forums during the past five years, did your Local League ask questions about immigration policy or policies affecting immigrants? Please provide examples of the questions.

10. Does your Local League provide legislative updates on policies related to immigration or immigrants? If yes, please provide information on these updates.

11. In your Local League's program of work, do you address issues related to immigrants or immigration? If yes, please give an example of the issues or policies and the way they fit into the program of work.

12. If your Local League participated in any of the programs administered by the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance in the Washington state Government, please check all that apply and provide more information about your league's participation in the comment box. If not, go to Question 13

a. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway program

b. Promoting Refugee Integration, Mobility, Empowerment (PRIME) Services

c. Immigration-Related Legal Services

d. Early Refugee School Impact Services (Birth to Five)

13. Has your Local League partnered with any refugee or immigration agencies that operate in Washington state? If so, please indicate the organizations with which you work and/or the activities in which you were engaged.

14. Is your Local League interested in doing programs and other activities related to immigration in the future? If so, please indicate your areas of interest.

15. If you have questions or would like more information about the Study on Welcoming Immigrants to Washington state, please let us know below or contact Susan Martin at pres.lwvsji@gmail.com

Bibliography

Afghanistan: Inter-agency Rapid Gender Analysis. 2022. Reliefweb. https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-inter-agency-rapid-gender-analysis-november-2022

American Immigration Council. 2024. “Immigrants in Washington.” Accessed September 2, 2024. https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/washington/#

American Immigration Law Association. 2024. Immigration Detention and Alternatives to Detention. 2024. AILA Doc. No. 21031937. https://www.aila.org/library/featured-issue-immigration-detention

An Act Relating to Dual Language in Early Learning and K-12 Education. Substitute House Bill 1445. 2017. Washington state: https://custom.statenet.com/public/resources.cgi?id=ID:bill:WA2017000H1445&ciq=ncsl&client_md=b0107e04ec740a7007501a3cfaf6ebd7&mode=current_text

An Act Relating to Language Access in Public Schools. Substitute House Bill 1153. 2022. Washington state: https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1153-S2.SL.pdf#page=1

Arai, Luanda. 2023. Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs and King County Office of Equity, Racial and Social Justice announce the Immigrant Safety and Access Network awardees. https://welcoming.seattle.gov/isan

Batalov, Jeanne (2024). “Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States,” Migration Information Source https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states-2024

Beekman, Daniel. 2024. WA lawmakers pass bill to create hotline for hate crimes and bias incidents. Seattle Times. March 2.

Bernstein, Shai, Rebecca Diamond, Abhisit Jiranaphawiboon, Timothy McQuade, and Beatriz Pousada. 2022. “The contribution of high-skilled immigrants to innovation in the United States.” National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 30797, December. Accessed September 7, 2024. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w30797/w30797.pdf

Budiman, Abby, Luis Noe-Bustamante, and Mark Lopez. 2020. “Naturalized Citizens Make Up Record One-in-Ten U.S. Eligible Voters in 2020.” Pew Research Center Report, February 26. Accessed September 16, 2024. https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2020/02/26/naturalized-citizens-make-up-record-one-in-ten-u-s-eligible-voters-in-2020/

Center for Human Rights. 2024 “The border is everywhere: Immigration enforcement in the contemporary PNW.” University of Washington, September. Accessed September 7, 2024. https://jsis.washington.edu/humanrights/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2024/09/2024-Enforcement-Trends-Report.pdf

Chamber of Commerce. 2024. Immigration. https://www.uschamber.com/immigration

City of Tacoma. 2024. “Council Member Olgy Diaz Passes Resolution 41378 to Support Access to Phone Services for Detainees in the Northwest ICE Processing Center.” Press Release. March 5. https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_council/city_council_news_releases/council_member_olgy_diaz_passes_resolution_to_support_access_to_phone_services_for_northwest_i_c_e_processing_center_detainees

Clickup. 2023. “The top patent earner in each state last year.” May 19. Accessed September 7, 2024. https://clickup.com/blog/top-patent-earner-in-each-state/

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (CIRA). 2021. “March 2020 – February 2021 Annual Report.” CIRA Annual Report Draft 2021_Final Edits.docx

Costa, Daniel. 2022. “As the H-2B visa program grows, the need for reforms that protect workers is greater than ever.” Economic Policy Institute. August 19. https://www.epi.org/publication/h-2b-industries-and-wage-theft/

Costa, Daniel and Ron Hira. 2020. “H-1B visas and prevailing wage levels.” Economic Policy Institute. May 4. https://www.epi.org/publication/h-1b-visas-and-prevailing-wage-levels/

County of Benton. 2024. Request an Interpreter / Solicitar una Intérprete. https://www.bentoncountywa.gov/pview.aspx?id=55159&catid=0

Crawford, J, N. Kapisavanhu, J. Moore, C. Crawford, T. Lundy. 2023. Advances in Public HealthVolume. Article ID 8889358, 20 pages. doi.org/10.1155/2023/8889358

Diocese of Olympia’s Refugee Resettlement Office. 2024. Resettlement. https://www.dioceserroseattle.org/resettlement

Dreier, Hannah. 2023. Alone and Exploited, Migrant Children Work Brutal Jobs Across the U.S. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/25/us/unaccompanied-migrant-child-workers-exploitation.html

East, Chloe. 2024. “The labor market impact of deportations.” The Brookings Institute. September 18. Accessed September 23. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-labor-market-impact-of-deportations/?b=1

Economic Innovation Group. 2024. Immigrant inventors are crucial for American national and economic security. https://eig.org/immigrants-patents/

Episcopal Migration Ministries. 2024. https://episcopalmigrationministries.org/

Fowler, Lilly Ana 2024. Another WA agency sues private prison company running ICE facility. KNKX Public Radio. February 13 https://www.knkx.org/social-justice/2024-02-13/washington-state-geo-group-ice-immigration-lawsuit

Gallardo, Veronica. 2023. Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) 2023 Authorizing Legislation: RCW 28A.180.020. Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2023-10/03-23-update-transitional-bilingual-instruction-program-tbip.pdf

Harborview Medical Center. 2024. Harborview Interpreter Services. https://ethnomed.org/about/interpreter-services/#our-mission

Higher Ed Immigration Portal. n.d. State Data: Washington https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/state/washington/#:~:text=Washington%20Senate%20Bill%20(S.B.),to%20apply%20for%20state%20loans

Highline College. 2024. Puget Sound Welcome Back Center. https://welcomeback.highline.edu/

Hilotin-Lee, Lyle T. 2023. Washington State Immigration Laws. Find Law. https://www.findlaw.com/immigration/immigration-laws-and-resources/washington-state-immigration-laws.html#Law

Hocker, Cornelius. 2024. Immigrants, refugees advocate for health care and unemployment benefits in Olympia. King5 News. https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/immigrants-refugees-rally-for-healthcare-unemployment-benefits/281-6e46400d-87e0-4fca-9bd7-d1fa9da08a28

Human Rights Center. 2024. Paths to Compliance: The Effort to Protect Immigrant Rights in Washington State. University of Washington. https://jsis.washington.edu/humanrights/2024/08/01/paths-to-compliance-the-effort-to-protect-immigrant-rights-in-washington-state/

Hunter, Steve. 2024. Gregerson state bill aims to improve immigration support: Designed to better address needs of refugees, immigrants arriving in Washington State. February 20.

ICE. 2024. “Northwest ICE Processing Center.” Accessed September 7, 2024. https://www.ice.gov/detain/detention-facilities/northwest-ice-processing-center-nwipc

Immigration and Nationality Act. 2019. US Citizenship and Immigration Services. https://www.uscis.gov/laws-and-policy/legislation/immigration-and-nationality-act

Inslee, Jay. 2017. Executive Order 17-01 Reaffirming Washington’s Commitment to Tolerance, Diversity, and Inclusiveness. https://governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/eo_17-01.pdf

Inslee, Jay. 2021. Inslee statement on rising cases of anti-Asian hate crimes. March 9. https://www.cha.wa.gov/news/2021/3/10/inslee-statement-on-rising-cases-of-anti-asian-hate-crimes?rq=hate%20crimes

International Rescue Committee. 2024. https://www.rescue.org/united-states/seattle-wa

Jewish Family Services. 2024. Intensive Case Management. https://www.jfsseattle.org/get-help/refugee-and-immigrant-services/#intensive-case-management

Kandel, William A. 2020. The Employment-Based Immigration Backlog. Congressional Research Service

Kerwin, Donald, Daniela Alulema, Michael Nicholson, and Robert Warren. 2020. Stateless in the United States: A Study to Estimate and Profile the US Stateless Population. CMS Report, January. New York: CMS.

King County Department of Community and Human Services. 2024. Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy. https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/depts/community-human-services/initiatives/levy/forproviders/translation

King County Housing Authority. 2024. Find a Home. https://www.kcha.org/housing/subsidized/eligibility

King County Library System. 2024. English Language Classes. https://kcls.bibliocommons.com/v2/events?series=66d25affba1dd2360020b3a4

Lakewood Policy. 2024. https://cityoflakewood.us/police-homepage/lpd-i-want-to/

Le Goff, Maelan.2017. Feminization of migration and trends in remittances. IZA World of Labor 2016: 220 doi: 10.15185/izawol.220

Lutheran Community Services Northwest. 2024. https://lcsnw.org/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwyL24BhCtARIsALo0fSAvrhb0bjK5rnR8ttNDxJttr7o4y-eW3N6W4YHQTwI6GpkDCwMTscsaAm6REALw_wcB

Martin, Susan. 2004. “Women and Migration,” report prepared for the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), CM/MMW/2003/WP.1, 14 January.

McCoy, Cory. 2024. ‘Gone for good.’ U.S. workers flee farms, leaving WA growers struggling under old rules. Tri-City Herald. Updated April 10, 2024. https://www.tri-cityherald.com/news/local/article287013755.html#storylink=cpy

Mid-Columbia Libraries. 2024. Bilingual Storytime With Ms. Mikki. https://midcolumbialibraries.org/events

Migration Policy Institute. 2024. U.S. Immigrant Population and Share over Time, 1850-Present. Accessed October 16. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-over-time

Moslimani, Mohamad and Jeffrey S. Passel. 2024. "What the data says about immigrants in the U.S." Pew Research Center. Accessed September 7, 2024. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/07/22/key-findings-about-us-immigrants/#:~:text=How%20many%20people%20in%20the,laws%20more%20permissive%20in%201965.

NCLS. 2023. "Legislatures at a Glance: Racial Composition, Washington State." Accessed September 27, 2024. https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiOWM4YTI4YjQtZDM2Yy00YWU5LTkyNGYtODYxMmUxZTExNDc3IiwidCI6IjM4MmZiOGIwLTRkYzMtNDEwNy04MGJkLTM1OTViMjQzMmZhZSIsImMiOjZ9

Ngai, Mae M. 2004. Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Northwest Immigration and Refugee Project. 2024. Impact Litigation. https://www.nwirp.org/our-work/impact-litigation/

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Seattle. 2023. OIRA Strategic Plan. https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/OIRA/OIRA-Strategic-Plan_2023-2026.pdf

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Seattle. 2024. Seattle Legal Defense Network. https://seattle.gov/iandraffairs/programs-and-services/immigration-legal-defense

Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO). 2024. 2023 OIDO Annual Report. Department of Homeland Security. https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/24_0329_oido_2023-annual-report-to-congress-508.pdf

Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA). 2024a. Notice of Funding Opportunity: Washington Migrant And Asylum-Seeker Support. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/ESA/oria/documents/DSHS%20ORIA%20NOFO%20WA%20MIgrant%20and%20Asylum-Seeker%20Support%20Project%20updated%2006-03-2024.pdf

ORIA. 2024b. Employment and Education Programs. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/csd-office-refugee-and-immigration-assistance/limited-english-proficiency-pathway

ORIA. 2024c. Food Assistance Program Employment and Training. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/csd-office-refugee-and-immigration-assistance/food-assistance-program-employment-and-training

ORIA. 2024d. Career Ladder for Educated and/or Vocationally Experienced Refugees. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/csd-office-refugee-and-immigration-assistance/career-ladder-educated-andor-vocationally-experienced-refugees

One America. 2024. Civic Engagement. https://weareoneamerica.org/our-work/civic-engagement/

Orloff Leslye E. 2022. Washington Public Benefits Screening Chart for Immigrant Survivors by Forms of Immigration Relief. National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project, https://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/wp-content/uploads/WA-Public-Benefits-Screening-Chart-9.5.22.pdf

Rajeevan, Parvathi. "Transnational lives and struggles of Indian immigrants on work and dependent visas in Dallas, Texas." PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2024

Ramage, Kaylee , Emma Stirling-Cameron , Nicole Elizabeth Ramos , Isela Martinez SanRoman, Ietza Bojorquez , Arianna Spata1, Brigitte Baltazar Lujano and Shira M. Goldenberg. 2023. "When you leave your country, this is what you're in for": experiences of structural, legal, and gender-based violence among asylum-seeking women at the Mexico-U.S. border. BMC Public Health 23:169

Raoul, Kwame, Andrea Joy Cambell, and Letitia James. 2023. Letter to The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas Secretary of Homeland Security. https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/foia/WorkAuthorization-AttorneyGeneralRaoul.pdf

Pasco School District. 2024. Dual Language. https://www.psd1.org/academic-programs/dual-language

Percy-Calaff, Kristin, Emily Scott, Lucas Snider and Michelle Matakas. 2023. Report To The Legislature: Update: Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP). Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2023-10/03-23-update-transitional-bilingual-instruction-program-tbip.pdf

Refugee and Immigrant Health Program. 2023. Health Updates. Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/DSHS%20RAC%20Public%20Forum%2007-27-2023.pdf

Refugee and Immigrant Health Program. 2024. Domestic Medical Screening Examination. https://doh.wa.gov/about-us/executive-offices/health-and-science/disease-control-and-health-statistics/communicable-disease-epidemiology/refugee-and-immigrant-health-program/domestic-medical-screening

Refugee and Immigrant Services Northwest. 2024. Interpretation and Translation Services. https://risnw.org/services-programs/interpretation-translation-services/

Refugee Women's Alliance. 2024. Our Services. https://www.rewa.org/services/

Sacred Heart Medical Center. 2024. Interpreter Services and Special Needs. https://www.providence.org/locations/wa/sacred-heart-medical-center/patients-and-visitors/special-needs

Samari, Goleen, Amanda Nagle and Kate Coleman-Minahan. 2021. "Measuring structural xenophobia: U.S. State immigration policy climates over ten years" SSM Population Health. *16*, 100938. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2021.100938

San Juan Island School District. 2024. Special Education and Related Services for Students. SJISD. https://www.sjisd.wednet.edu/domain/35

SB 5497 https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Senate%20Bills/5497.pdf

Seattle Policy. 2024. https://www.seattle.gov/police/need-help/crimes-against-persons/uvisa#:~:text=A%20complete%20U%2DVisa%20application,U%2DVisa%20will%20be%20denied.

Smith, Hillel R. 2022. The Law of Immigration Detention: A Brief Introduction. Congressional Research Service https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11343#:~:text=detention%20framework:,aliens%20who%20have%20not%20been

Smith, Jenn. 2022. A new law will help families access interpreters in WA public schools. The Seattle Times. July 4, 2022 https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/a-new-law-will-help-families-access-interpreters-in-washington-public-schools/

Snohomish Libraries. 2024. English Language Learning Classes.https://www.sno-isle.org/blogs/post/english-language-learning-classes/#:~:text=Sno%2DIsle%20Libraries,-Contact%20the%20Library

Straut-Eppsteiner, Holly. 2022. "U.S. Immigration Courts: Access to Counsel in Removal Proceedings and Legal Access Programs." Congressional Research Service. Accessed on September 17, 2024 https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12158/3#:~:text=As%20of%20FY2022%2C%20Q1%2C%20approximately,Status%2C%20FY2013%2DMay%202022

Substitute House Bill 2368. 2024. Chapter 153, Laws of 2024 68th Legislature, Regular Session. https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/2368-S.SL.pdf#page=1

Swathy. 2024. "U.S. Tech Layoffs and Visa Changes: Impact on Indian Workers." Telugu 360, September 21. Accessed September 25, 2024. https://www.telugu360.com/u-s-tech-layoffs-and-visa-changes-impact-on-indian-workers/

Thrive International. 2024a. Women Empowerment Program. https://thriveint.org/about

Thrive International. 2024b. https://thriveint.org/mahima-project

Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. 2024. https://www.tchispanicchamber.com/

Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition. 2024. About US. https://tricitiesimmigrantcoalition.com/#about

TRAC Immigration. 2024. "Detention facilities average daily population: NWIPC." Accessed September 7, 2024. https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/detentionstats/facilities.html

UC Berkeley Labor Center. 2022. "The Public Cost of Low-Wage Jobs in the Washington Construction Industry." Accessed September 17, 2024. https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/release-the-public-cost-of-low-wage-jobs-in-the-washington-construction-industry/

U.S. Census Bureau. 2022. "American Community Survey 1-year estimates." Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Washington September 27, 2024. http://censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US53-washington/.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2024a. "American Community Survey 2022: ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profile, DP02 Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: Washington State Native and Foreign-Born." Accessed September 2, 2024. https://data.census.gov/table?q=Native%20and%20Foreign-Born&g=040XX00US53

U.S. Census Bureau. 2024b. "American Community Survey 2022: ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profile, DP02 Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: Washington State Foreign-Born by Gender." Accessed September 2, 2024. https://data.census.gov/table?q=Foreign-Born%20by%20gender&g=040XX00US53

U.S. Census Bureau. 2024c. "Quick Facts: Washington State Foreign born 2018-2022 by County." Accessed September 2, 2024. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/kingcountywashington,US/POP645222

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services. n.d. "H-1B authorized-to-work population estimate." Office of Policy and Strategy, Policy Research Division. Accessed September 2, 2024. https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/reports/USCIS%20H-1B%20Authorized%20to%20Work%20Report.pdf

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services. 2024. "FAQs for Individuals in H-1B Nonimmigrant Status." Accessed September 17, 2024. https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations-and-fashion-models/faqs-for-individuals-in-h-1b-nonimmigrant-status

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. 2023. Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 2022. Data from used to construct Figure 1 from Table 1 Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident

Status: Fiscal Years 1820 to 2022. Accessed October 16. https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/yearbook/2022

U.S. State Department. 2024. "FY 2023 nonimmigrant visas issued." Bureau of Consular Affairs, Nonimmigrant Visa Statistics. Accessed September 12, 2024. https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/Non-Immigrant-Statistics/NIVDetailTables/FY23NIVDetailTable.pdf

Washington HealthplanFinder. 2024. Health Care Options for Immigrants. https://www.wahealthplanfinder.org/us/en/tools-and-resources/health-care-education/health-care-options-for-immigrants.html#:~:text=Effective%20as%20of%20Dec.,not%20used%20for%20immigration%20enforcement.

Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network. 2024. About U.S. https://waisn.org/about-us/

Washington New Americans. 2024. About Washington New Americans. https://wanewamericans.org/about-washington-new-americans/

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. n.d. Immigrant Student's Rights to Attend Public Schools. https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/equity-and-civil-rights/immigrant-students-rights-attend-public-schools

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 2022. Newcomer Students. https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2023-08/08newcomerstudents1.pdf

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 2024a. "Clover Park School District." Accessed September 19, 2024. https://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/100047

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 2024b. "Frequently Asked Questions: Did you know?" Accessed September 12, 2024. https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/access-opportunity-education/migrant-and-multilingual-education/multilingual-education-program/transitional-bilingual-instruction-program-guidance/learning-english-washington-schools-what-families-should-know

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 2024c. Currently Meeting Workgroups. https://ospi.k12.wa.us/about-ospi/workgroups-committees/currently-meeting-workgroups

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. 2024. Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training. https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/i-best/

Washington State Board of Education 2017. Undocumented Students. Washington State Board of Education. https://www.sbe.wa.gov/2017-undocumented-students

Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Interpreter Services. https://lni.wa.gov/patient-care/treating-patients/interpreter-services/#workers-have-a-right-to-interpreter-services

Washington State Department of Social and and Health Services. 2019. Refugee Resettlement Agencies in Washington. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/refugee-assistance-program/refugee-resettlement-agencies-washington

Washington State Health Care Authority. 2024. Interpreter Services (Client) https://www.hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/i-need-medical-dental-or-vision-care/interpreter-services-clients#:~:text=HCA%20uses%20the%20State's%20Master,the%20DSHS%20ODHH%20website%E2%80%8B

Washington State Health Care Authority. 2024a. Apple Health Expansion enrollment cap. https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/news/announcements/apple-health-expansion-enrollment-cap

Washington State Health Care Authority. 2024b. Interpreter Services. https://www.hca.wa.gov/billers-providers-partners/program-information-providers/interpreter-services-providers

Washington State Legislature. N.D. Citizenship and immigration status—Definitions. WAC 388-424-0001

Washington State Office of the Attorney General. 2019a. AG Ferguson challenges Trump's attempt to remove protections for immigrant children... https://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ag-ferguson-challenges-trump-s-attempt-remove-protections-immigrant-children

Washington State Office of the Attorney General. 2019b. Keep Washington Working Act FAQ for Law Enforcement. https://www.atg.wa.gov/keep-washington-working-act-faq-law-enforcement#:~:text=KWW%20prohibits%20local%20LEAs%20from%20providing%20any%20%E2%80%9Cnonpublicly%20available%20personal,law%20or%20a%20lawfully%20issued

Washington State Office of the Attorney General. 2021 Jury finds GEO, for-profit operator of Tacoma ICE detention center, must pay detainee workers minimum wage. https://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ag-ferguson-jury-finds-geo-profit-operator-tacoma-ice-detention-center-must-pay

Washington State Office of the Attorney General. 2023. Federal Litigation. https://www.atg.wa.gov/federal-litigation-2017-20

Washington State Professional Educator Standards Board. 2024a. Recruiting Washington Teachers. https://www.pesb.wa.gov/pathways/rwt/

White, Maddie. 2023. Record number of businesses in Washington cited for child labor violations in 2022. King5 Seattle, WA. https://www.king5.com/article/money/business/businesses-washington-child-labor-violations-2022/281-cd321f5a-4e65-47e9-95d4-3c47aae07a92

Williamson, Molly Weston. 2023. Understanding the Self Employed in the United States. Center for American Progress. Accessed September 17, 2024. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/understanding-the-self-employed-in-the-united-states/

World Relief. 2024. English Classes. https://worldrelief.org/western-wa/access-services/english-classes/

Yen, Wei. 2023a. Washington State's immigrant population 2010-21. OFM Health Care Research Center, Research Brief No. 110. Accessed September 2, 2024. https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/dataresearch/researchbriefs/brief110.pdf

Yen, Wei. 2023b. "Washington's non-citizen immigrant population continued to experience disparities in health coverage." OFM Health Care Research Center, Research Brief No.112. https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/dataresearch/researchbriefs/brief112.pdf

Interview List

Alicic, Radica, 2024. Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center. September 13.

CastroLang, Jim. 2024. Thrive International. June 26.

Chavez, Malou. 2024. Northwest Immigrant Rights Project. June 6.

Durden, Will. 2024. Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Basic Education for Adults Program. September 10.

Eastern Washington University 2024. Focus Group with Kebede, Kassahun and Pui-Yan Lam. June 26.

Goodwin, Alvita. 2024. Benton Franklin Health Department. September 10.

Goss, Eli. 2024. One America. July 31.

Guillen, Rosalinda and Alfredo Juarez. 2024. Foodjustice.org. August 20.

Hillman, Andrea, Zac Reimer and Yubi Schollmeyer. 2024. San Juan County High School, Sheriff's Office, and Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center. September 11.

Natalie, Sammie, and Stteffany. 2024. Three Women Immigrants. August 22.

Nitsch, Melissa 2024. Office of Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO). May 30.

Percy-Calaff, Kristin and Sylvia Reyna. 2024. Multilingual and Migrant Education, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. July 16.

Peterson, Sarah. 2024. Office Refugee and Immigrant Assistance. June 17.

Reyes, Vanessa. 2024. Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network. June 6.

Richardson, Heather. 2024. English Language Development, Spokane Public Schools. June 27

Sagan, Olga. 2024. Piroshky Bakery. September 5.

Shee, Hsa Wah and Mayra Torres. 2024. Kennewick School District. September 25.

Stipe, Marsha. 2024. Tri-Cities Immigrant Coalition. July 18.

List of Contributors

LWVWA Immigration Study Committee
Susan Martin, Chair - LWV of The San Juans
Judy Golberg - LWV of Benton and Franklin Counties
Christine Grantham - LWV of Benton and Franklin Counties
Janet Lenart - LWV of Seattle King County
Terri Martin - LWV of Seattle King County
Lydia Zepeda - LWV of Tacoma-Pierce County
Shelley Kneip - LWVWA Board of Directors
Mary Coltrane, LWVWA President

Co-Authors
Susan Martin, professor emerita, PhD
Lydia Zepeda, professor emerita, PhD

Reading Committee
Beth Pellicciotti - LWV of Spokane Area
Cynthia Stewart - LWV of Tacoma-Pierce County
Marsha Stipe - LWV of Benton and Franklin Counties

Technical Reading Committee
Kathy Freidman, University of Washington
Edward Alden, University of Western Washington