

ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE – IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE MINISTRY
Responding to Immigrants Seeking Help

Immigrants from many faith traditions view our parishes as places of safety and support. Encountering a pastoral presence from you can ease their suffering, as they have often been turned away from other places due to eligibility or issues. Immigrants may be seeking any of the following types of assistance.

Cash Assistance

- We strongly advise against offering cash assistance, including an informal ‘pass-the-hat’ effort which will be seen as a donation from the parish.

Ask if they have arrived in Washington State since December 2021.

- If so, refer them to the Washington Migrant and Asylum Seeker Support Project (WA MASS) at <https://washington-mass-hub.zendesk.com/hc/en-us> or (541) 703-8336. WA MASS will help them to connect to services for which they are eligible. This service may expire after June 2025.

For people who are asking for help finding housing, shelter, or other social service needs

- [Get Help - St. Vincent de Paul](#) – are sometimes able to negotiate payment plans with landlords. Call the help line at 206-676-6449 Monday through Friday, 8am – 3pm.
- Catholic Community Services provides a wide range of services for immigrants. They can be reached at (206) 328-5696 or info@ccsww.org or by going to their website at <https://ccsww.org>
- Finding shelter, transitional, or long-term housing is very difficult. There is likely little you could do beyond covering a hotel stay if you have the funds. Helping someone get into a shelter will require calling around to the various local shelters to see if there is space and what the eligibility criteria are for each. Search for shelters in your area at <https://search.wa211.org/>

Legal Assistance for Immigration Issues

- Please do not refer to a specific immigration lawyer or nonprofit legal service provider, as this is easily taken as a recommendation which you should avoid.
- You may hear people saying that they have a lawyer, but they are not doing anything. While fraud is a real concern, it is also true that much of the process is a waiting game and there’s nothing a lawyer can do while waiting.
- If they are not looking for a lawyer, but “*just want to ask someone about their situation*” refer them to Patrick Suhrbier, Senior Immigration Legal Services Coordinator at St. James Cathedral. Patrick is accredited by the Department of Justice to provide immigration legal assistance. He is fluent in Spanish. Call 206-382-4374 to make an in-person, virtual, or phone appointment.
- Here are the resources for finding an immigration lawyer or nonprofit legal service provider.
 - Catholic Immigration Legal Services: [Catholic Immigration Legal Services](#)
 - Immigration Law Help: a searchable database at <https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org/>
 - American Immigration Lawyers Association has a list of accredited attorneys at <https://ailalawyer.com/>

How immigrants can check their immigration case status and find processing times

- Use the case status online tool to check for updates about an immigration case. You will need the 13-character receipt number from the application or petition. [Immigration-Case-Status](#) or search “tracking my US immigration application.” If calling from the U.S., contact the USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 or TTY 1-800-767-1833.

Looking for work

- Most immigrants need an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) to legally work in the United States. Citizens and legal permanent residents (Green Cards holders) do not need an EAD. Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for an EAD. After arriving in the U.S., it can take up to a year to obtain work authorization.
- Asylum-seekers who work without authorization can seriously jeopardize their asylum applications. If your parish is considering offering employment, you must obtain proof of eligibility to work. To do otherwise would put the immigrant at risk.
- Casa Latina serves Hispanics and helps people to find work. They are well-versed in employment issues and are a good source for Hispanic immigrants trying to find work or looking community connections. Call 206-686-2625 or 206-686-2624. <https://casa-latina.org>

Sponsoring Refugees, Asylum-seekers, and others

- As of February 2025, programs that allow individuals or groups to sponsor a refugee or other migrant to come to the US are closed.
- Groups and parishes can sponsor a recent refugee arrival or asylum seeker. These are immigrants who have already arrived in the US and need assistance getting settled.
- The Archdiocese’s Immigrant and Refugee Ministry [Welcome Circles](#) program helps parishes through the entire process of sponsorship. Sponsorship requires certification, a financial commitment, and a commitment to help the sponsored individual or family find housing and employment, enroll in school and public benefits, acquire necessary identification, connect with their faith and cultural communities, etc. If your parish is interested in sponsoring a refugee or asylum-seeker, please contact Amy Nash at Amy.Nash@seattlearch.org to learn more. We cannot respond to requests from immigrants looking for a sponsor.

Handouts for Immigrants

See our webpage at [Immigrant & Refugee Ministry - Archdiocese of Seattle](#) for downloadable and printable resources for immigrants. If you cannot find what you need, contact Chris Koehler, Director of Missions and Immigrants Affairs at 206-274-3194 or Chris.Koehler@seattlearch.org.