

2022-2023

Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund

Impact Evaluation Report



WASHINGTON COVID-19
IMMIGRANT RELIEF FUND

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Background

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us in Washington state found ourselves unemployed, exposed to the COVID virus, sick, or caring for loved ones who contracted the virus. Through June 2023, Washington state alone saw more than 14,000 deaths due to the COVID-19 virus, according to the CDC. Undocumented Washingtonians however, experienced disproportionate economic instability since they were ineligible for government-sponsored assistance programs afforded to those with citizenship and more stable or permanent immigration statuses.

After grassroots advocacy efforts from hundreds of community-led organizations and the subsequent approval of funding from the legislature of Washington state and Governor Inslee, the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund (“Immigrant Relief Fund”) was created. It provided dollars that did not need to be repaid to those left without economic stimulus checks, unemployment insurance, and other state and federal pandemic assistance. Based on the results of the Impact Evaluation Survey completed by community members, more than 75% of applicants do not even have basic healthcare (**Figure 1**).

During the first rounds of the Immigrant Relief Fund (between October 2020 and May 2021) \$127.6 million were allocated to the Immigrant Relief Fund. With these initial rounds of funding, 121,850 applicants received a grant of \$1,000. Each approved applicant was awarded a grant without requirements to repay the funds or impacts to completing tax returns in the future. Further details about the first iterations of the Immigrant Relief Fund can be found through [Washington Dream Coalition](#).

2022-2023 Funding

In April 2021, the Washington State Legislature approved an additional \$340 million for another round of funding for undocumented Washingtonians. As in past rounds, this iteration of the Immigrant Relief Fund required targeted community engagement, communications development efforts, and trusted messengers to encourage eligible community members to apply.

In 2022, the Department of Social and Health Services contracted with the Latino Community Fund and Washington Community Alliance to head culturally appropriate communication materials and intentionally inclusive community engagement activities. With trusted subcontractors and subject matter experts, the Immigrant Relief Fund was able to reach undocumented immigrants through innovative outreach efforts and communication channels that resulted in positive results.

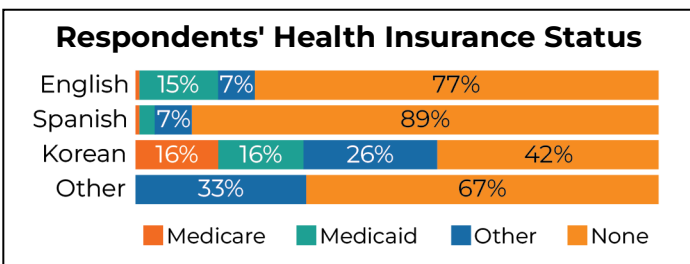


Figure 1: Health Insurance Status of Impact Evaluation Survey respondents (2023)

Community Engagement

The WA COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund was created by and for community members that did not qualify for unemployment insurance nor the federal stimulus checks due to their immigration status. Because of the nature of the target audience, it was essential to lead with community engagement efforts in the preferred communication formats from the start to reach community members who traditionally may have been hesitant to participate in government sponsored programs (Figure 2).

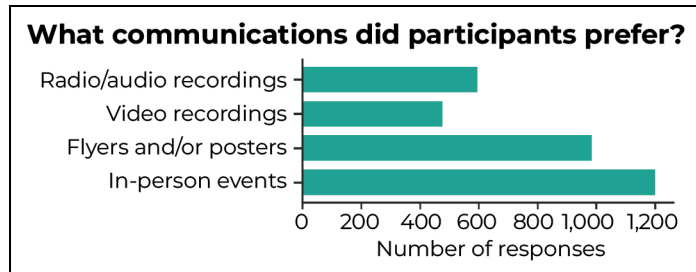


Figure 2: Communication preference of Impact Evaluation Survey respondents (2023)

In order to have the most reach as possible with the intended audience, many community organizations leveraged community ties to promote the fund, offered application assistance, and built trust with immigrant communities in Washington state before, during, and after the open application period for the Immigrant Relief Fund.

Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN) for example, subcontracted with over 35 community organizations who led application assistance events, provided programmatic feedback, and distributed communications materials in a variety of languages and methods across the state.

One of the most successful community engagement events led by WAISN was a multiday summit held in Toppenish, WA in August 2023 (Figure 3). The agenda for the hybrid (virtual and in-person) summit had embedded time to review developing communication materials, Q&A sessions for subcontractors, and collaborative work sessions for community organizations. Subcontractors of all sizes could get to know each other and know about the work being done, breaking down the traditional regional silos of “east” vs “west” sides of the state.

Partner community organizations across the state held over 200 in-person events between September 19 and November 14, 2023 so that community members would be able to attend if they felt comfortable and needed a physical person to help them with applying to the Immigrant Relief Fund. Events had to be promoted amongst prospective fund applicants while also maintaining safety, especially from potential anti-immigrant sentiments (Figure 4).

Throughout the fund, there were continuous updates with communities across Washington state. In the month of October alone, there were over 50,000 instances where



Figure 3: Photos from August 2023 Summit in Toppenish, WA



Figure 4: Photos from community engagement events



Communication Materials

Communication materials were created for the Immigrant Relief Fund with the goal to be accessible across multiple languages and promote the fund across Washington state. All materials were prepared with consideration of community input (surveys, focus groups, feedback sessions) to effectively reach intended audience members.

Pyramid Communications created the materials, vetted the language to ensure accuracy, and received pre-approval by DSHS before distribution. They created simple designs that were not too overworked or filled with jargon that were distributed by subcontracted community organizations and volunteers. And thanks to the materials being stored in a shared Google Drive, community organizations could access them 24/7 and they were available for immediate distribution because all material language was pre-approved and there were written instructions for usage.

Translations of communications materials were vetted by the Multilingual Review Committee (MRC), which was led by the WAISN Language Justice Coordinator. The MRC created and utilized a “Terms Glossary” to be used throughout the Immigrant Relief Fund’s duration to ensure consistency in all translated materials. Given language complexities, the Terms Glossary decreased the possibility of mistranslations between languages. Based on videos viewed, applications received, and

community based subcontractors highlighted communications materials either through indirect methods such as social media posts or directly referring community members to the fund website (immigrantreliefwa.org). Responses from the Impact Evaluation Survey showed that more than 30% of community members heard about the Immigrant Relief Fund through a community-based organization (Figure 5).

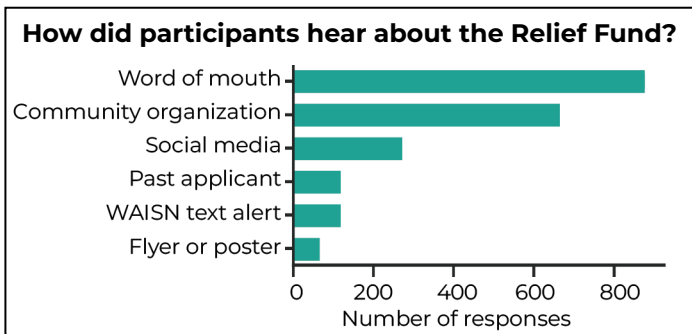


Figure 5: Ways in which respondents of Impact Evaluation Survey learned about Immigrant Relief Fund (2023)

Additionally, the WAISN Hotline helped over 900 callers who qualified for the Immigrant Relief Fund fill out applications and allowed community members to speak with a person, as opposed to an automated computer system about the Immigrant Relief Fund. Not everyone feels comfortable disclosing their immigration status or asking for resources in their preferred language, especially if there might not be an interpreter available, but the WAISN Hotline and community partners were able to ease some of that anxiety when speaking with community members.



Figure 6: Sample communications materials created for the 2022-2023 cycle of the Immigrant Relief Fund.

impact survey responses completed, English and Spanish were the most reached/utilized languages. Unfortunately, there are not as many public communication channels for other languages (African and Asian languages in particular).

All written, visual, physical, and virtual communications prepared were produced in at least 5 core languages (English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Tagalog), but there were basic outreach materials available in at least 45 languages, including: Aku, Amharic, Arabic, Bemba, Chuukese, Dari, English, Farsi, Fijian, French, Fula, Garifuna, Hindi, Hmong, Jola, K'iche', Karen, Kinyarwanda, Korean, Lingala, Malay, Mam, Mandarin, Mandinka, Manjako, Mixteco, Nahuatal, Pashto, Portuguese, Punjabi, Q'anjob'al, Russian, Sarahulle, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Thai, Tongan, Triqui, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Wolof, Zapoteco (**Figure 6**).

In 2022, the Immigrant Relief Fund also had a bigger ad, earned media, television, and

radio broadcasting presence than previous rounds given the increased budget for communications development (**Figure 7**). The digital ads campaign received favorable outreach responses in a variety of languages.

In addition to written messaging and digital ads, Pyramid Communications and community partners created many videos, including introductions to the fund, in-depth Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's), application walk-throughs, and periodic updates about the fund (**Figure 8**). Feedback collected from the community reiterated the need to have video content to make the fund more accessible to applicants with mobility, transportation, literacy, and visual limitations; those using Facebook & WhatsApp; and those unable to attend in-person application assistance events.



Figure 8: Still image from video created for the 2022-2023 cycle of the Immigrant Relief Fund.

Pyramid Communications was also in charge of creating and maintaining the Immigrant Relief Fund website. This also included pre-

Language	Impressions	Clicks	CPC	CTR	Cost
Amharic	1,096,000	4,250	\$1.65	0.39%	\$7,000
Chinese*	4,351,148	9,950	\$3.94	0.23%	\$39,221
English	8,107,010	52,265	\$0.97	0.64%	\$50,750
Hindi	471,385	600	\$7.07	0.13%	\$4,242
Korean	2,639,149	8,282	\$2.73	0.31%	\$22,582
Somali	1,047,365	2,719	\$2.57	0.26%	\$7,000
Spanish	13,055,019	88,640	\$1.03	0.68%	\$90,946
Swahili	671,423	2,065	\$2.54	0.31%	\$5,250
Tagalog	2,633,059	10,063	\$2.14	0.38%	\$21,485
Vietnamese	4,436,586	21,289	\$1.65	0.48%	\$35,128
Grand Total	38,508,144	200,123	\$1.42	0.52%	\$283,604

Figure 7: Impressions: total times an ad was seen. CPC = cost per click, CTR: click-through rate (% of impressions with a click).



Figure 9: Sample communications materials created for the 2022-2023 cycle of the Immigrant Relief Fund.

approved and accessible information in the five core languages and highlighted updates such as delays in payment disbursements and the videos that community members mentioned being important to share widely (**Figures 9 and 10**). From September 19, 2022 to November 14, 2022, when the application was open, the website linked users to the Immigrant Relief Fund application platform so that community members could apply directly to the fund after checking their eligibility and getting answers to their questions. After the open application period, the website remained accessible to



Figure 10: Still image from video created for the 2022-2023 cycle of the Immigrant Relief Fund.

community members looking for answers to any outstanding questions or looking for follow-up community resources.

Considerations

Immigrant communities have stories that are multilingual, multicultural, and diverse in every way. First, second and third generation immigrants may have different needs and funds like the immigrant Relief Fund need to consider that:

- Elders and those in rural areas don't always own phones or computers, lack consistent internet access, or aren't familiar with websites or social media platforms.
- Those speaking languages that aren't widespread locally and those with limited literacy may have trouble learning about and applying funds.
- Professional translation is often very formal and academic, and can be difficult for diverse immigrant community members to understand.
- People need timely updates about how to resolve problems with their applications.
- Community members need clear details about what they are applying to and what to expect once they've submitted their application to receive funds.
- Not all community members will obtain direct information about the available funds, whether or not it was free to apply, whether taxes would need to be paid on the funds received, and whether or not personal information submitted in the application might be shared with ICE or law enforcement.

These items required collaborative troubleshooting with all stakeholders and needed to be considered for all community engagement and communications development efforts. Communication materials needed to be translated into a variety of languages and distributed to a variety of communities for example. Engagement partners needed to reach people in ways that were immigrant-focused which included answering questions and reassuring community members of the details associated with applying to the Immigrant Relief Fund.

Conclusions

In the end, the '22-'23 round of the Immigrant Relief Fund granted payments of \$3075 to over 100,000 applicants (**Figure 11**). All in all, the perspective that community comes first was evident and made the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund a major success. For example, community members who completed their application in Spanish with assistance from a community organization had a higher acceptance rate than those that completed the application in Spanish on their own or with help from a friend or family member (**Figure 12**).

Overall, from the planning to the execution phase of the Immigrant Relief Fund, all stakeholders showed their commitment to reaching as many qualified applicants as possible through as many avenues as possible. The fact that there was at least one funded application from each of Washington state's 39 counties speaks to the wide reach that the development of communications and community engagement efforts had in its last iteration. We saw positive outcomes for communities across the state thanks to the dedication of DSHS' Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA), all community-led organizations, subcontractors, volunteers, neighbors and family members who participated in the Immigrant Relief Fund.

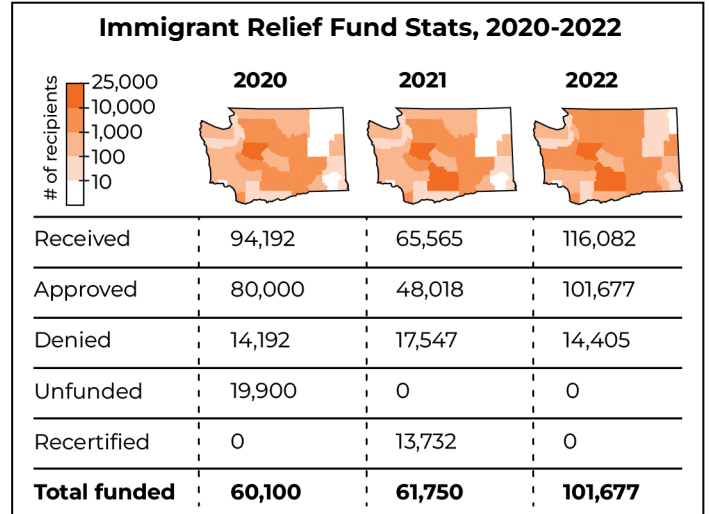


Figure 11: Immigrant Relief Fund recipient stats, 2020-2022 (source: DSHS)

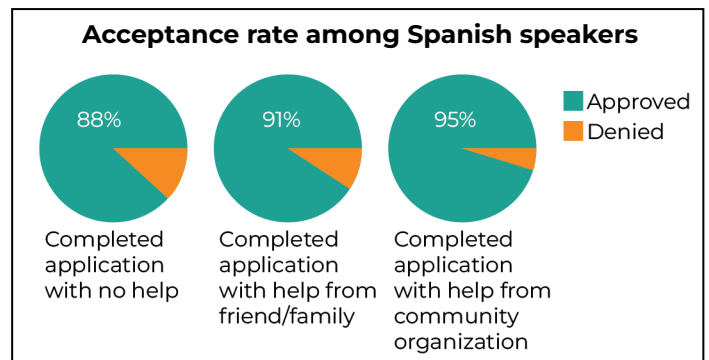


Figure 12: Acceptance rate among Spanish Speakers (source: Impact Evaluation Survey 2023)

For information about possible resources for Washingtonians and ways to stay informed about immigrant outreach efforts in Washington state, visit immigrantreliefwa.gov or dshs.wa.gov.

Impact Evaluation Survey Results

What is your employment status?	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	SouthSo.
Full-time employed	333	69	171	59	20	16	11
Part-time employed	318	162	89	121	37	41	21
Unemployed	154	155	68	120	39	20	31
What is your field of work?	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	SouthSo.
Agriculture	545	4	39	1	21	27	2
Food service	15	65	87	53	10	3	7
Caregiver	39	16	10	22	7	1	6
Construction	50	45	71	27	8	3	4
Education	1	4	4	10	0	1	1
Healthcare	1	1	0	2	1	0	2
Landscaping	9	13	16	9	1	12	4
Retail	7	6	9	4	0	0	0
Other	21	78	26	57	9	14	8
What support do you still need?	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	SouthSo.
Rent/housing assistance	433	167	199	146	32	58	32
Utilities	367	129	156	86	29	55	27
Medical expenses	327	78	74	71	30	29	17
Debt	219	158	59	119	43	30	27
Other	74	52	48	31	24	6	7
What health insurance do you have?	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	SouthSo.
Medicaid	41	20	5	24	1	4	7
Medicare	3	7	9	8	1	1	3
Other	33	41	26	30	8	5	10
None	726	318	289	236	86	67	43
Reasons for not having health insurance:	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	SouthSo.
Cost	490	184	112	122	39	49	27
Ineligible due to immigration status	360	142	196	97	43	43	23
Do not know how to get insurance	42	57	21	39	6	5	7
Lost insurance after losing job	11	13	9	8	1	3	2
Worried about public charge	12	30	8	10	8	7	6
Other	10	3	1	3	3	1	1

Data from the Impact Evaluation Survey (2,141 responses). Central: Central Washington (Adams, Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, and Yakima); NW: Northwestern Washington (Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom); SW: Southwestern Washington (Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, and Pacific); King Co: King County; Eastern: Eastern Washington (Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman); Peninsula: Olympic Peninsula and Coastal Washington (Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, and Mason); SouthSo: South Puget Sound (Pierce and Thurston).

Impact Evaluation Survey Results

What is your preferred language?	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	SouthSo.
English	174	14	67	63	21	3	9
Spanish	632	355	263	218	75	76	51
Korean	0	17	0	18	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Did you apply for the Relief Fund in 2023?	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	South
Yes	789	348	326	260	75	76	51
No	17	38	4	40	6	7	10
Was your application approved?	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	South
Yes	729	302	316	236	87	68	45
No	51	26	24	19	2	2	6
How did you learn about the Relief Fund?	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	South
Past applicant	71	13	11	14	2	5	1
Community org	324	74	89	90	37	29	15
Flyer/poster	26	5	25	7	0	2	0
Social media	77	82	22	51	11	9	12
WAISN text alert	19	38	24	17	8	5	3
Word of mouth	285	173	157	118	38	27	32
What did you use your the Relief Fund for?	Central	NW	SW	King Co.	Eastern	Peninsula	South
Rent and/or utilities	424	174	182	149	39	43	31
Health expenses	15	11	18	8	3	3	1
Food/basic necessities	239	123	101	75	36	23	16
Other	51	6	15	4	9	1	3

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