

Northwest IMMIGRANT RIGHTS Project

2017-2018 IMPACT REPORT

Our Mission

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project promotes justice by defending and advancing the rights of immigrants through direct legal services, systemic advocacy, and community education.



It's no surprise that these past two years have been challenging for immigrants and immigrant rights - and, by extension, for NWIRP.



It seems like every day, we learn of a new injustice or terrible proposal that upends the lives and safety of immigrants in our community. But it is precisely because of these injustices that our work is so important. Thanks to the generous support of our friends, volunteers, and community partners, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project continues to carry out our mission. We've increased the number of lawyers for our direct representation efforts, growing into a staff of over 100 full-time employees dedicated to serving the community from offices in Granger, Seattle, Tacoma and Wenatchee. We've celebrated legal victories at the county, state, and national level thanks to the efforts of our impact litigation team. And we've served 20,000 community members each year, helping immigrants in Washington State and beyond stay together with their loved ones, find protection from violence in their homes or home countries, and pursue new opportunities in work, education, and civic engagement.

Whether you have been with us for the past 35 years or have just joined us recently – we are glad you are part of our family. Together, we will continue to create change, fight for justice, and advance the rights of immigrant community members. Because immigrant rights are human rights.

With gratitude,

Jorge L. Barón, Executive Director

IMPACT

BY THE NUMBERS

Thanks to your support, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project helped **20,000 immigrants** each year in 2017 and 2018 with a variety of legal services ranging from asylum applications to removal defense. Here are a few of the other ways your support helped make a difference in the past two years:



124 individuals granted asylum, safe from dangerous situations they fled in their home countries

young people under the age of 21 granted the right to stay in the United States

129



497 Green Cards issued

cases placed with attorneys in NWIRP's pro bono network

566



1,349 employment cards approved for neighbors and immigrants wanting to work in our communities

people given direct representation by NWIRP staff

6,001



10,000+ estimated number of community members served through NWIRP's community education

DETENTION & REMOVAL DEFENSE



Defending immigrants in removal proceedings

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project defends community members who are incarcerated at the Northwest ICE Processing Center (formerly the Northwest Detention Center) in Tacoma. Our clients include survivors of domestic violence, trafficking, and torture, as well as people who have been convicted of crimes. We take on cases that are challenging because all immigrants deserve access to high-quality legal representation.

Facing deportation after fleeing the Khmer Rouge, by Van Ham

I am from Cambodia and came to the United States in 1982. I initially moved to San Francisco and moved around California before settling in Seattle. I really like this area.

In March of 2017, I was put into deportation proceedings and taken to the Northwest ICE Processing Center. Henry and his team at NWIRP saved my life. That's why I refer friends to this organization - because I know that the staff is the best and that they take care of their clients. If I was deported to Cambodia I'd lose everything - my family, my children, my sense of self. The loneliness would be overwhelming. I haven't been to Cambodia since fleeing from the Khmer Rouge in 1979. I'm so happy that the case is over. Now, I'm waiting for my green card and afterwards hope I can apply for citizenship. The presidential administration makes it so hard - they change the law like people change their socks. But now I don't have to worry about that anymore. My family is so happy now.

Van Ham is a former NWIRP client



CHILDREN AND YOUTH ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Standing up for vulnerable immigrant children and youth

Congress created a special type of immigration protection for children and youth who have suffered abuse, abandonment, or neglect by a parent. At Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, we help children and youth apply for this form of protection, called Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) in order to access the safety and stability they deserve.

I am inspired by the bravery of my clients, by Meghan Casey

Our work has always been challenging. Quite frankly, though, it's much harder today than when I first became an immigration attorney seven years ago. Much harder. Most supporters probably know about the Muslim ban, attempts to terminate DACA, and the so-called zero tolerance policy, but there have been countless other changes to policies, procedures, and practices that have created immense burdens on our work. Cases are taking much longer than before, and they have also become increasingly more complex to navigate through.

Through it all, though, I will not give up. The young people and children I've seen are fleeing conditions and circumstances that are horrific. They are the bravest people I have ever come to know and their bravery inspires me every single day. It is the honor of my life to work alongside them.

The work of an immigration attorney has always been about heart, and I am extremely grateful to NWIRP supporters for allowing me and my colleagues the opportunity to advocate on behalf of those in need – regardless of where they were born.

Meghan Casey is the supervising attorney of the Children and Youth Advocacy Program

STANDING WITH SURVIVORS



Standing with survivors of violence

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project ensures that survivors of violence and other crimes have access to life-changing forms of immigration relief made possible after Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 and the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA) in 2000 to ensure that immigration status doesn't make a survivor dependent on their abusers.

A light in the darkness, by Ana Araiza

For me, NWIRP was a light in the darkness during a time that I was devastated and mired in confusion, fear, and sadness. It was a very difficult situation for me mentally and emotionally. NWIRP helped me feel safe. They spoke my language and explained how they could help me. My representative, Norma, showed me such kindness. My story was very painful but they felt my pain and sorrow.

I don't have enough words to thank them. For survivors of violence like myself, the justice process can be overwhelming. But NWIRP offers hope, restoration, and a new beginning for survivors. After receiving my U Visa, I've become a medical assistant and work for a family practice clinic. I also give presentations for local organizations in order to help other community members who are suffering. Helping others is a great blessing.

Ana Araiza is a former NWIRP client



FAMILY SERVICES

Families belong together

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project keeps families together. Every year, we assist with family applications and represent family members facing deportation to help ensure that people can stay together with their loved ones.

Mahalaga ang Pamilya, by Chris Collado

“Mahalaga ang Pamilya,” Filipino for “family is important,” was a phrase often spoken by my grandmother and mother which resonated with me throughout my journey to becoming an immigration attorney. I was inspired to go to law school after witnessing how a lack of legal assistance for people in my community resulted in unfair and unjust consequences.

As a staff attorney in NWIRP’s family services unit, I’ve had the privilege of interacting with people of all backgrounds, and I’ve come to learn that the importance of family is shared by everyone from every walk of life and from every part of the world. That being reunited with loved ones is essential to being whole, and most importantly, to feeling complete.

Our clients bring a wide and extraordinary array of skills and strengths to our communities. Many have shown and exhibited the greatest of wills and dedication. We are committed to doing everything we can so that our clients can be with their families.

Chris Collado is the supervising attorney of the Family Services Unit in Seattle

ASYLUM



Protecting people from violence

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project was founded in 1984 as part of a grassroots effort to respond to the legal needs of Central American refugees fleeing civil wars. For the past 35 years, NWIRP has played a key role in providing legal assistance for people fleeing persecution. We assist asylum seekers from around the globe: from the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, to Central and South America, to Russia and all of Asia.

How NWIRP helped me, by Marbella Carporr

I came to the United States in search of a chance to live. In my own country I faced much danger. Here in the United States, transgender people have more respect than in my country.

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project helped me find an amazing lawyer, Alison. She helped me prepare my case and she prepared and translated documents for me. She represented me in the final hearing and advised me about how to answer the judge's questions. Always, in every way, NWIRP helped me.

With NWIRP's help, many people have the chance to stay here in the United States. Many people—immigrants, refugees—don't have the money to pay for a lawyer or to get legal representation. Without NWIRP, they would be deported. I would like to say to the people who support this organization, many people like me need your help. Without your help, we would be in great danger.

Marbella Caporr is a former NWIRP client



CITIZENSHIP AND NATURALIZATION

Providing new opportunities through citizenship

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project serves clients who are interested in becoming United States citizens. After becoming citizens, NWIRP clients can fully participate in civic life, with the right to vote in local, state, and federal elections. In addition, they have greater rights in filing petitions to reunite with family members, and cannot be deported.

A family kept apart because of their nationality, by Sanaz Neissani

The president's travel ban has become the biggest issue in our family's life. It's caused me so much depression. Even though NWIRP helped me become a US citizen, my parents still cannot come to visit our family because they are from Iran.

My father has been to the US many times and has never had any issues, but now he can't come visit. He hasn't been able to come for three years. My mother applied for her green card, and it took two years to be scheduled for an interview. Such a lengthy process. But she did everything she needed to do. They told her they can't grant her a visa just because of where she's from.

My son has autism and needs special attention, and we really needed one of my parents to be able to visit to help us out, so that one of us could find a job. My husband is an American, and he can't even have his in-laws come and take care of their grandchildren when it is needed the most, just because of their nationality? It's awful and against the values that used to matter in this country. How can we consider this country great if we don't let families stay together?

Sanaz Neissani is a former NWIRP client

IMPACT LITIGATION



One case changes many lives

This summer, after three-and-a-half years in detention, Vu Nguyen was finally released. He has lived in the United States for nearly 20 years after coming with his mother and younger sister from Vietnam. Despite being a green card holder, ICE decided to charge Vu as deportable due to convictions for drug possession and an old violation of a no-contact order from a former partner - convictions for which Vu had already served his time.

After Vu was taken to the detention center, Vu's former partner - along with his sister, mother and all three of his children - submitted letters to the court describing how he was a dedicated and loving father. Despite these testimonies and Vu's transformed life, ICE claimed he was not even eligible to ask for a second chance because he admitted under oath that he had used drugs over a decade ago. We appealed his case, first to the Board of Immigration Appeals and eventually to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Finally, in the summer of 2018, the Ninth Circuit published a decision which found that admitting past drug use could not make someone ineligible to ask for a chance to keep their green card. The ruling meant that not only did Vu get the chance to stay with his family, but so did many more people with green cards in the Ninth Circuit.

Now, Vu is back in Olympia, working at his family's small business, taking care of his children, and assisting his mother. We are proud to stand with community members like Mr. Nguyen.

VOLUNTEERS



Skills and services that make a difference

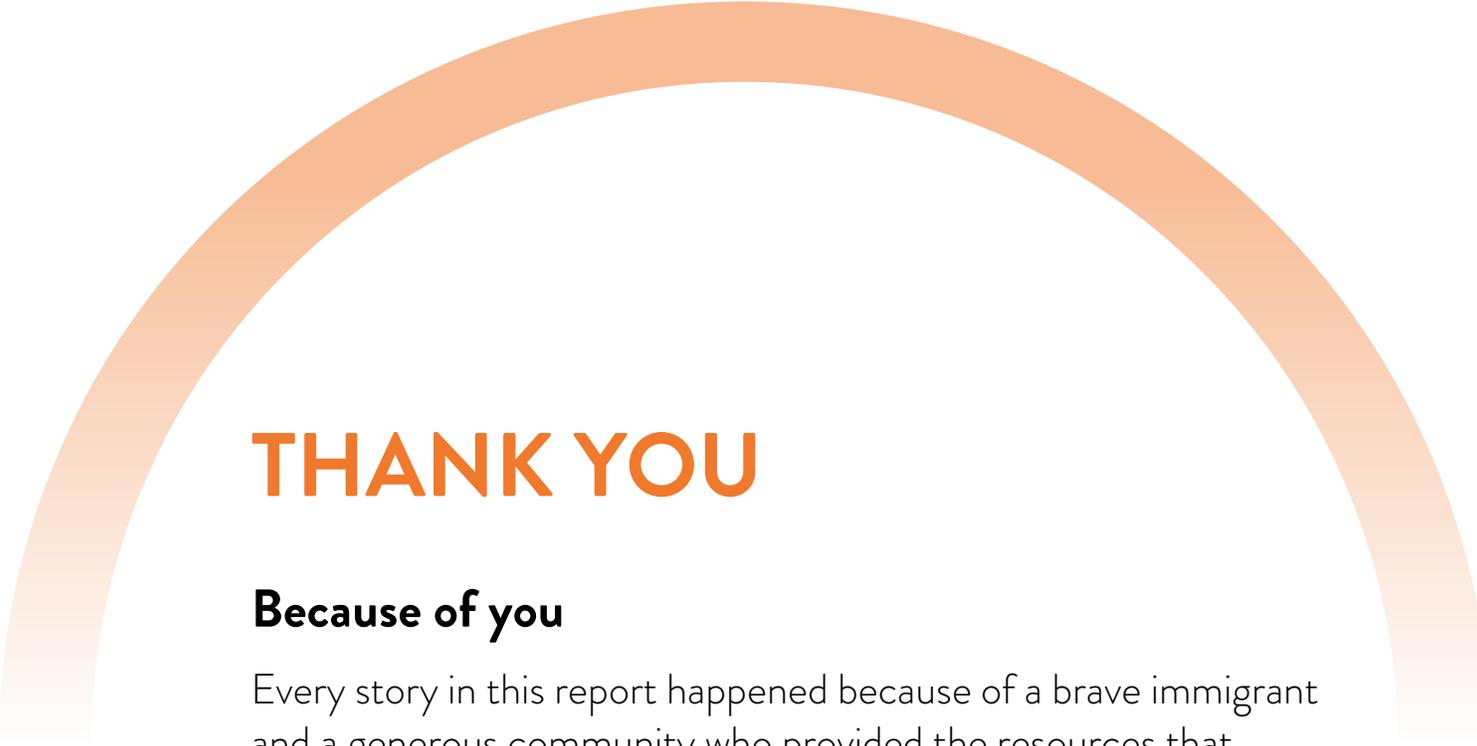
NWIRP directly represents many clients in legal proceedings, but the demand for the services we provide is greater than our staff can address. As a result, NWIRP has developed a robust pro bono program involving hundreds of attorneys. In 2018, attorneys and other skilled professionals throughout Washington state donated the equivalent of \$4,164,018 of their time and expertise in service to our clients.

The most meaningful work I've done, by Matthew Wurdeman

In 2018, I was prompted to start taking pro bono cases for NWIRP by the current state of our country. Volunteering for NWIRP has been the highlight of my career and some of the most meaningful work that I've done. My first client, Nestor, and I became very close. He was released from the Northwest Detention Center just a few days before Thanksgiving and was able to join my family for Thanksgiving dinner. He still calls my mom periodically to check in. He has since moved to Virginia, and I happened to be there for a deposition and we were able to meet up there. I started a go-fund-me to get his wife and kids here when their application gets approved. Nestor has truly become part of my family.

Taking on a pro bono case helps you make a huge difference in one person's life who is here because of an incredible amount of bravery. I had had no prior immigration experience, but when I had questions, NWIRP was there to provide the support I needed. For any attorney out there who thinks they don't have the experience or knowledge necessary to take on an asylum case, you do. If you've thought about doing pro bono immigration work, do it. Because if you wait for the perfect time, it will never come.

Matthew Wurdeman is an attorney at Connelly Law Offices in Seattle and Tacoma



THANK YOU

Because of you

Every story in this report happened because of a brave immigrant and a generous community who provided the resources that allowed NWIRP staff to offer our services.

So from all of us, to all of you, we would like to say thank you.

Thank you to our clients, who have come from over 160 different countries, often crossing literal mountains and valleys and seas and continents in search of a new life. Your courage makes our work possible.

Thank you to our staff, who work long hours hunting for the right argument to bring their clients to safety and legal status.

Thank you to our volunteers, who also work long hours – sometimes searching for the right argument for their pro bono case, sometimes helping us clean up at an event, sometimes serving on our board of directors, and sometimes helping us translate or interpret one of the 74 different languages our clients speak.

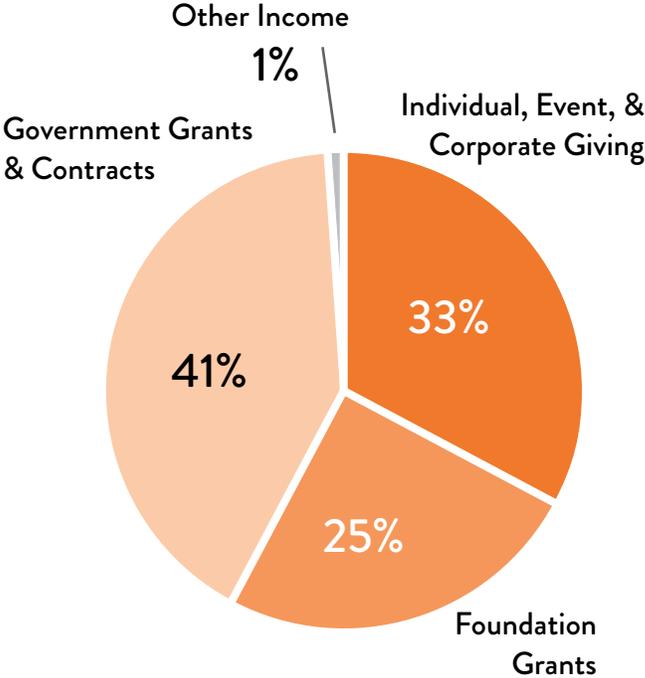
And thank you to our donors and supporters. We could not do what we do without your kindness, heart, and the resources you provide.

We are humbled and proud to have you all in our NWIRP family.

2018 FINANCIALS

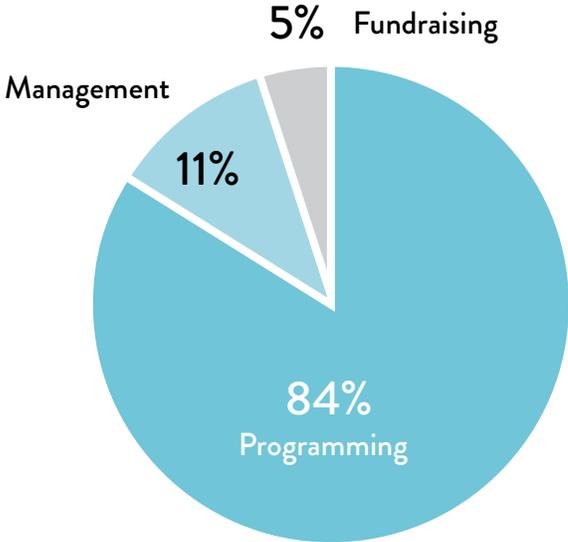
2018 Revenue

Individual, Event, & Corporate Giving	\$ 4,124,898
Foundation Grants	\$ 3,132,759
Government Grants and Contracts	\$ 5,175,748
Other Income	\$ 193,583
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 12,626,988



2018 Expenses

Programming	\$ 8,525,767
Management & General Operations	\$ 1,107,129
Fundraising	\$ 555,790
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 10,188,686



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