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New report highlights perspectives and policy recommendations from undocumented immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic

KING COUNTY, WA — A new report from the Washington Dream Coalition (WDC), Community Provides: Undocumented Communities in Washington State during the COVID-19 Pandemic, showcases data and stories from over 78,000 undocumented immigrants who applied to relief funds.

“When COVID-19 hit, many of us witnessed firsthand how our families and communities were impacted by layoffs and lack of support in healthcare,” said Alejandra Pérez, a Washington Dream Coalition organizer. “If systems weren’t going to be there to protect us, we knew we had to do something about it.”

On March 27, 2020, WDC launched the COVID-19 Relief Fund for Undocumented Individuals in Washington State, in partnership with Scholarship Junkies, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, and the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network. Within six months, they successfully raised more than $7.1 million, supporting more than 6,000 undocumented individuals facing financial hardship during the pandemic. To date, it remains the largest grassroots, undocumented-specific fund in the United States.

The WDC’s COVID-19 Relief Fund for Undocumented Individuals in Washington State paved the way for government-funded relief, including the Seattle Immigrant and Refugee COVID-19 Disaster Relief Fund and the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund. Over 400 community organizations worked together to push for the latter, a state-funded program modeled after the WDC’s success. This community effort secured $62.6 million in relief aid.

Community Provides: Undocumented Communities in Washington State during the COVID-19 Pandemic includes recommendations to policymakers to provide unemployment insurance, healthcare insurance, and flexible cash assistance. The report also emphasizes that such programs should be co-designed with undocumented stakeholders.
Undocumented immigrants in Washington, and in the majority of the country, are unable to access unemployment and health insurance. In addition, the federal stimulus package prohibited any household with an undocumented member on their tax refund from receiving a stimulus check. In Wash., 109,000 U.S.-born children (7 percent of K-12 students) have undocumented parents, according to the Migration Policy Institute.

“Now, we need more systemic change. We need more than one-time bandaid support to undocumented individuals; we need long-term solutions,” said WDC organizer Daniela Murguia.

ABOUT THE WASHINGTON DREAM COALITION

Washington Dream Coalition (WDC) is a network of undocumented and formerly undocumented professionals of color. WDC’s mission is to address inequities and obstacles faced by undocumented immigrants in Washington State through community-based organizing, education, and advocacy. Learn more at [www.washingtondreamcoalition.org](http://www.washingtondreamcoalition.org).