

Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance

Economic Services Administration | Community Services Division

Frequently Asked Questions Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund April 20, 2021

1. What is the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund?

The Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund is a pool of funding created during the coronavirus pandemic to support people ineligible for federal stimulus money or unemployment benefits because of their immigration status. Between October 2020 and January 2021, the fund released just under \$60 million of federal CARES act funding to provide a \$1,000 grant to eligible individuals. In February, Governor Inslee signed [House Bill 1368](#) that provided an additional \$65 million of federal CARES Act funding for this community. The most recent round of funding will be able to provide approximately 40,000 grants through an open application. It will also provide grants to approximately 20,000 people from the previous application who were unable to receive a grant because of limited resources.

2. Why do we need a special fund for the Washington immigrant community?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of Washingtonians have been adversely impacted and have endured economic hardships. The state and federal government have offered substantial relief packages that have helped support many Washingtonians. Unfortunately, nearly a quarter of a million people are unable to access unemployment insurance compensation and federal stimulus packages due to their immigration status. These Washingtonians substantially contribute to Washington's economy and often work in industries that have been hardest hit by COVID-19.

3. When will the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund be available?

A new application for the Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund will be open from April 21 to May 21, 2021. People who applied during the previous application and are eligible to receive a grant will be contacted by community partners to confirm their eligibility. Payments will be released to eligible applicants beginning June 1 through June 30, 2021.

4. How is the fund being managed?

DSHS is partnering with immigrant-led community organizations in Washington to manage the fund. The organizations include the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network and Scholarship Junkies. To see a full list of organizations that are partnering with DSHS during this round of the fund, please refer to www.immigranreliefwa.org or [DSHS Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance website](#). DSHS also partnered with Submittable, a company that offers application services for programs such as this.

5. Who is eligible?

To be eligible to receive funds under this program, individuals must establish that they:

- Are a Washington state resident.
- Are at least 18 years of age.
- Have been significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic, such as loss of employment or significant reduction in work hours, contracting the coronavirus or caring for a family member who contracted the coronavirus.
- Are ineligible to receive unemployment insurance compensation or federal stimulus dollars due to immigration status.
- Have an income at or below 250% of the federal poverty level.

6. Where can people apply?

Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, prioritizing those in greatest need. Eligible community members can apply online at www.immigrantreliefwa.org in English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish or Vietnamese.

7. If people need help applying, where can they get assistance?

Information and application assistance is available through DSHS community-based partners. The Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network operates a hotline that will be available every day from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Other community-based organizations participating in this project will be available to offer assistance, and their information is online at www.immigrantreliefwa.org or at the [DSHS Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance website](#).

8. How will people received the cash grant?

After applications are received, they will be processed for eligibility and prioritized for a grant. Funds will be released to the approved applicants from June 1 through June 30, 2021. Applicants can select a direct deposit, check or pre-paid gift card. It may take two to three weeks for checks and gift cards to arrive in the mail.

9. How much will an individual receive from the Washington COVID-19 Relief Fund? How many people in the home can receive the Washington COVID-19 Relief Fund assistance?

Approved recipients will receive a one-time payment of \$1,000 per applicant. Every adult in a household is eligible to apply to receive a grant.

10. Can a person apply to receive a grant from this fund if they received a grant before?

Yes, they can. Each grant application is a new opportunity for an individual in need to receive assistance. People who received a grant from the fund previously can apply to be considered to receive an additional grant from this fund.

11. How do I know if I’m under the 250% federal poverty level?

The federal poverty level is an index set by the federal government. It is based on the number of people in your household and your monthly or yearly income. See the chart below to determine if your income is below the threshold. For example, if you have three people in your family and you earn less than \$4,575 a month or \$54,900 a year, you would be eligible for this program.

Household/Family Size	250% FPL Monthly Income	250% FPL Annual Income
1	\$2,683	\$32,200
2	\$3,629	\$43,550
3	\$4,575	\$54,900
4	\$5,521	\$66,250
5	\$6,467	\$77,600
6	\$7,413	\$88,950
7	\$8,358	\$100,300
8	\$9,304	\$111,650
9	\$10,250	\$123,000
10	\$11,196	\$134,350

12. If more people apply for the fund than there are funds available, how will the fund determine who receives a grant?

The need in the community is greater than the amount of funding available. DSHS is required to prioritize grants to people who are most in need of financial assistance.

13. If someone receives this COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund assistance, will it affect their ability to get a green card (adjust status) or to become a U.S. citizen? Will receiving this assistance make someone a public charge?

Assistance from this fund is considered disaster relief, and the federal government should not take it under consideration for the public charge rule. Receiving assistance from the fund should not impact your ability to obtain a green card. For more information about public charge, visit the [DSHS Public Charge Page](#).

Contact: Sarah Peterson, Chief for Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, via email at sarah.peterson@dshs.wa.gov.