



## **WAISN'S POLICY PLATFORM 2025/2026**

### PRIMARY POLICY PLATFORM

#### Primary Platform Summary

The top three needs of immigrant and refugee communities—as demonstrated by our hotline data, listening sessions, membership survey, and one-on-one conversations with community members—are:

1. Support for healthcare access;
2. Cost of living assistance (particularly housing support); and
3. Unemployment-related assistance.

Therefore, WAISN will continue to lead advocacy efforts for the following campaigns as *Primary Priorities*:

#### *The Unemployment Insurance for Undocumented Workers Campaign*

**WAISN will continue to advocate for a bill to create and fully fund an unemployment insurance program for undocumented workers equivalent to the existing program that is available for Washington residents with employment authorization.**

#### *The Health Equity for Immigrants Campaign*

**WAISN will continue to advocate for a bill to codify and fully fund the Apple Health Expansion Program, which would provide coverage to all eligible low-income immigrant and refugee community members. We also recommend advocating for continued and additional funding for Cascade Care subsidies.**

#### *Support for Housing in Secondary Priorities*

**Support for housing-related campaigns will be central to WAISN's Secondary Priorities and we will reevaluate next year whether we would like to deepen our engagement in one or more housing-related campaigns.**

## Campaign Details

### ***Unemployment Insurance for Undocumented Workers***

#### *Issue Summary*

The Unemployment Insurance for Undocumented Workers (UI) bill seeks to provide unemployment insurance and benefits to undocumented workers in the State of Washington. In the 2023 legislative session, the bill advanced further in the legislative process than in any prior year of the campaign, advancing to fiscal committees in both chambers after receiving hearings in both the Senate and House, however, it did not receive a hearing to continue despite organizational efforts.

During the 2024 legislative session, the bill was stymied, primarily due to the lack of political support as a result of the funding source being connected to Washington State's General Fund. The coalition was able to win a workgroup with the prospective administering agency, the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) which is currently underway. This workgroup seeks to bring together immigrant justice advocates with labor and business representatives to find a means by which to fund the proposed program within the current tax model and without raising taxes.

WAISN and our coalition partners—One America, Asian Counseling and Referrals Service (ACRS), Columbia Legal Services (CLS), Fair Work Center & Working Washington, Latino Community Fund (LCF), Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP), Washington State Budget and Policy Center, SEIU 6, Scholar Fund, Familias Unidas por La Justicia/ C2C and SEIU 775, among others—are currently in the process of base-building across the state and organizing political support alongside our legislative champion(s) to put forth the bill in the upcoming 2025 legislative session.

#### *Reasoning & Evidence*

Basic needs support continues to be a top issue for immigrant and refugee community members. Many of our community members face financial instability due to seasonal or intermittent employment and discrimination and exploitation in the workplace. At the same time, undocumented workers are excluded from unemployment benefits that their employers contribute to on their behalf. Unemployment insurance would allow community members to receive income during interim periods of employment and allow them to afford the cost of basic needs.

We stand behind the UI bill because our communities deserve to have financial security and have their basic needs met without having to put themselves and their families at risk of persecution.

1. Job security and financial stability.



- Access to unemployment benefits was identified as necessary to maintain financial stability in the face of job insecurity and to ensure sufficient time to find a fitting job. Participants in our community listening sessions shared that it has been difficult to sustain a job in Washington State.<sup>1</sup> This is a sentiment shared by WAISN's membership: **73% of Membership Survey respondents said access to unemployment insurance was one of the top challenges faced by their communities and 62% identified lack of employment as a top challenge.**<sup>2</sup>
- Listening session participants shared that when they or their families face loss of employment they struggle with paying for fundamental necessities such as (*in order of priority*) housing, utilities, aliments, transportation (gas/car maintenance), and health medications. **As a result, they rush into any available job, whether or not it is suitable or meets their needs.**<sup>3</sup>
- **Of the WIRF Survey respondents, 38% are employed part-time, 32% are employed full-time, and 29% are unemployed.** Of those currently employed, when asked what their field of work is we received more responses than the number of respondents.<sup>4</sup> Therefore we can infer that some respondents work multiple jobs. Unemployment insurance would allow people sufficient time to search for suitable employment and not have to work multiple jobs in order to have financial stability. Additionally, it would provide financial stability for the nearly one third who are unemployed.
- **Over 35% of callers to the WAISN Hotline are agricultural workers.** Agricultural work in our state is seasonal; many work overtime and double shifts during the spring and summer seasons in order to have savings for the low end of work from late fall through winter.<sup>5</sup> Unemployment insurance for these workers would support them during the low periods of seasonal work.

2. Rent, utility bills, food, and basic necessities continue to be top concerns.

- One of the top concerns of our communities is the ability to pay rent, utilities, food, and other basic necessities. Callers to the WAISN Hotline prioritize community resources as well as immigration concerns and support needs. **Of the 206 calls reported in Q1, about 40% of callers inquired about community resources and 29% of callers inquired about immigration concerns/support.** Of the callers who asked about community resources, 47% were calling about housing/utilities/cash assistance, with rent assistance being the top request followed by utilities, homelessness, housing, eviction, and cash assistance.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Listening Sessions Report 2024.

<sup>2</sup> WAISN Membership Survey 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Listening Sessions Report 2024.

<sup>4</sup> 2022 Washington Immigrant Relief Fund Survey.

<sup>5</sup> 2023 WAISN Hotline Data.

<sup>6</sup> 2024 WAISN Hotline Data.



Unemployment insurance can address these concerns by providing financial security and stability if someone loses their employment.

- **62% of WAISN members selected the Washington Immigrant Relief Fund (WIRF) during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2023 as the most meaningful WAISN initiative for themselves and their community.**<sup>7</sup> This fund provided direct cash assistance to undocumented Washingtonians who faced job loss as a result of the pandemic—77% of respondents to the WIRF Survey reported losing work due to the pandemic but were ineligible for federal stimulus funds or unemployment benefits. WIRF recipients reported that they used WIRF money to pay for rent and utilities (61%), food and other basic necessities (36%), and health care expenses (3%).<sup>8</sup>
- The impact of WIRF cannot be understated, but it was a temporary reprieve and our communities deserve a permanent program. When asked what outcomes they'd like to see WAISN organize around, one respondent answered, "**Ganar más fondos para las campañas de igualdad en la salud y desempleo para todos y que sea un beneficio estable y no solo temporales.**" (*"Win more funds for the health equity and unemployment for all campaigns and for it to be a stable benefit and not only temporary."*)<sup>9</sup>
- Many individuals have to make difficult decisions between prioritizing feeding their families, keeping a roof over their heads, and paying for health care. This becomes particularly challenging when facing job insecurity and reduced or no work during off-seasons. A testimony that was shared during this past session stated the following, "**too many times I've had to decide when I don't have a job whether I should buy my medications as I am diabetic or if I should pay the light bill, rent or even food.**"<sup>10</sup>

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## **Health Equity For Immigrants**

### *Issue Summary*

The Health Equity for Immigrants Campaign (HEIC) has successfully advocated for two programs that have brought immigrant and refugee communities closer to health equity. In 2023, HEIC successfully achieved a final budget that included \$49.5 million for the creation of Apple Health Expansion (AHE), a Medicaid-like program for adults with incomes below 138% FPL; \$100 million in state funding for Cascade Care Savings subsidies for all Washingtonians with incomes up to 250% FPL with an additional \$10 million to provide subsidies for undocumented

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<sup>7</sup> WAISN Membership Survey 2024.

<sup>8</sup> 2022 Washington Immigrant Relief Fund Survey.

<sup>9</sup> WAISN Membership Survey 2024.

<sup>10</sup> UI Hearing Testimonies 2023.



community members; and \$3.7 million in new funds to support outreach, customer assistance, and administration for these programs.

In 2024, the HEIC won \$27.5 million additional dollars to fund the AHE to ensure that the state could provide coverage to as many people as soon as possible, with a total commitment of \$77M by the launch of the program on July 1, 2024. In addition, WAISN and community advocates have been deeply involved in the Health Care Authority's Temporary Community Engagement Advisory Council to ensure the rollout of the program was as community-centered as possible, given the bureaucratic and legislative constraints of the program. AHE launched on July 1st and has been able to provide healthcare to 12,000 Washington residents who previously did not have healthcare access.

These victories are due to the advocacy and organizing efforts, community testimonies, direct actions, and strategic planning of WAISN with our coalition partners: American Civil Liberties Union WA (ACLU-WA), Asian Counseling and Referrals Service (ACRS), Columbia Legal Services (CLS), the Equitable Care Coalition, Washington State Budget and Policy Center and Legal Voice. But there is still more work to be done to expand AHE access to more people.

Health coverage remains out of reach for those who do not qualify for AHE. In November 2023, Cascade Care, Washington State's public option for health insurance plans, became available for the first time to immigrants and refugees of all statuses with the opportunity to receive state subsidies. Despite this advancement, many impacted community members still say that without the support that federal subsidies provide to fill the gap in covering the cost of premiums as well as access to cost-sharing and other forms of assistance, health care is still inaccessible and out of reach for many individuals and families.

### *Reasoning & Evidence*

Access to healthcare continues to be out of reach to immigrants and refugee community members due to minimal information, unaffordability, and lack of trust in the healthcare system. The AHE currently only covers 12,000 people, or close to 12% of Washington's immigrant and refugee community residents who lack health care despite a need for at least three times that amount at that income level, according to recent OFM figures.<sup>11</sup> There is also currently only funding for one year.

Additionally, Qualified Health Plans that can be purchased through Cascade Care continue to be out of reach for many individuals and families due to the high monthly premium costs and lack of cost-sharing. Too many immigrants and refugees have to go without routine visits for dental, vision, or general care. Further expansion through increased funding is crucial to ensuring that every Washingtonian will have access to healthcare services.

1. Health coverage options are still inaccessible or unknown to our community members.

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<sup>11</sup> Washington State Office of Financial Management May 2023 Report.



- **65% of respondents to WAISN’s Membership Survey reported that healthcare access was a challenge for their communities.**<sup>12</sup> Data from the WAISN Hotline also demonstrates this challenge as 38% of callers reported that no one or only some in their family has health insurance and it was the second highest community resource callers inquired about to the Hotline this winter.<sup>13</sup>
- The lack of healthcare coverage is particularly alarming when considering that **97% of WAISN Hotline callers who participated in a demographic survey reported that they or someone in their household is living with a chronic disease or a disability.** The most frequently reported chronic illnesses are diabetes, high blood pressure, and lung disease while the most frequently reported disabilities are autism spectrum disorder, physical: musculoskeletal disabilities, anxiety disorders, and other mental health.<sup>14</sup>
- Participants in WAISN’s listening sessions reported that they were either unaware of the new healthcare coverage programs or did not receive enough information about them. They also expressed confusion about healthcare access and its impact on their ability to apply for immigration status and shared that they did not receive clear responses to questions from healthcare agency workers. This indicates a need to continue pushing agencies and lawmakers to improve outreach and engagement and listen to community concerns.

## 2. Health insurance is not affordable for our communities

- Cost has been a major barrier to our communities being able to access healthcare. **86% of respondents to the WIRF Survey who were employed either full-time or part-time reported not having health insurance primarily due to the cost or being ineligible.** Additionally, 65% reported foregoing medical care due to lack of insurance or cost.<sup>15</sup> In our listening sessions, we heard that people put off seeking medical attention and even resort to self-medicating when sick or injured in order to avoid costly bills.<sup>16</sup>
- One of the accomplishments of the HEI campaign has been ensuring access to purchasing qualified health plans for people of all immigration statuses. **However, participants across our listening sessions stated they could not benefit from this because the cost of purchasing insurance was too high.** Multiple participants in each listening session agreed that the Apple Health Expansion program should receive further funding so that more people can access affordable healthcare.<sup>17</sup>

## 3. Lack of cultural competency and discrimination continue to inhibit care

<sup>12</sup> WAISN Membership Survey 2024.

<sup>13</sup> 2024 WAISN Hotline Data.

<sup>14</sup> 2024 WAISN Hotline Data.

<sup>15</sup> 2022 Washington Immigrant Relief Fund Survey.

<sup>16</sup> Listening Sessions Report 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Listening Sessions Report 2024.



- In addition to cost, discrimination, cultural misunderstandings, and lack of trust in healthcare service providers were shared as a barrier to accessing healthcare. Multiple listening session participants from different countries of origin noted a difference in treatment when seeking care and revealing their immigration status; this was discussed most passionately by community members from African countries. Additionally, participants also shared that sometimes they sought care from unqualified or underqualified medical professionals from within their community because they had a feeling of trust in addition to lower costs.<sup>18</sup>
- WAISN's role in the HEI campaign extends beyond advocating for the expansion of the program and includes representing and vocalizing the concerns of our communities throughout the creation, outreach, and implementation of the new healthcare programs so that healthcare can be affordable and accessible to all.

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### ***Support for Housing in Secondary Priorities***

With rising inflation levels, petering employment, and the economy on the brink of a recession, immigrant communities are bearing the brunt of the nation's poor state of affairs. With still no safety nets available to immigrants in the realm of housing, our community members are increasingly concerned with keeping a roof over their heads.

#### *Reasoning & Evidence*

- The need for support with housing and cost of living expenses came up repeatedly during the various points of engagement with community members and partners; it was the top reason for calls to the Hotline<sup>19</sup> and identified by 80% of membership survey respondents as the top challenge facing their communities.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, in our listening sessions, across both the Latine and African participants, insecurity around housing and the need for rental assistance was mentioned.<sup>21</sup>
- Community members would like more stability in their lives and more access to assistance for rising costs: **“Que ayuden con nuevos fondos de ayuda para los indocumentados por que si necesitamos ayuda financiera el coste de vida cada vez está más alto”** (*“Help with new assistance funds for those who are undocumented because we do need financial assistance the cost of living is higher every time.”*)<sup>22</sup> Similar comments were made numerous times throughout our listening sessions while **73% and 65% of WAISN members cited living costs and food insecurity respectively as top concerns.**<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Listening Sessions Report 2024.

<sup>19</sup> 2024 WAISN Hotline Data.

<sup>20</sup> WAISN Membership Survey 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Listening Sessions Report 2024.

<sup>22</sup> WAISN Membership Survey 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Listening Sessions Report 2024; WAISN Membership Survey 2024.



## ***Additional Concerns***

Below are additional concerns that arose in the data sets analyzed and conversations had:

- Anti-immigrant bias and violence (67% of respondents to Membership Survey);
- Education access and financial aid to undocumented students (62% of respondents to Membership Survey and 2024 Listening Sessions);
- Immigration process concerns and desire for legal assistance (30% of Hotline calls);
- Housing concerns, particularly rental and utility assistance as well as rent stabilization and rent control (47% of Hotline calls);
- Elderly Care and Services (2024 Listening Sessions);
- Immigration reform (2024 Listening Sessions and WAISN Membership Survey).

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## ***SECONDARY POLICY PLATFORM***

Through surveying our Network members and policy partners, researching the legislative landscape, engaging in a listening tour with key partners, and through a vote by WAISN's Steering Committee, the following campaigns will comprise WAISN's Secondary Policy Platform for 2025-2026.

### Secondary Policy Platform

#### ***Rent Stabilization***

- Summary: Protecting tenants by prohibiting abusive and extreme rent increases that are used to deny tenants of their rights by capping yearly rent increases to 5%, proposing predictable 12-month leases, 180-day notices for annual increases, and allowing for termination of rental agreements if a proposed increase exceeds 3%.
- Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Firelands, Association of Manufactured Homeowners, Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance, Washington Community Alliance, and others.
- Reasoning to include in Secondary Policy Platform:
  - Alignment with WAISN's Mission, Core Values, and Analytical Frameworks: Affordable housing is one of the strongest concerns facing our communities. Supporting the basic needs and housing security of our community members is an important component of advancing the rights and dignity of our communities.
  - Priority of Immigrant and Refugee Communities and WAISN Membership:





Throughout our various forms of engagement with community, the need for affordable housing has repeatedly been raised as one of the strongest priorities of immigrant and refugee communities.

- Addressing Policy Focus Area:
    - Meeting Our Basic Needs by making housing more affordable by addressing some of the major drivers of rising rent prices.
  - Cohesion with WAISN's Strengths and Superpowers: Elevating the voices of immigrant and refugee communities impacted by the rising cost of housing can support this campaign to demonstrate solidarity among all Washingtonians impacted by unaffordable housing.
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### **Ending Collaboration between ICE and Dept of Corrections**

- Summary: Though Washington state has barred local law enforcement agencies from collaborating with federal immigration enforcement, the Department of Corrections is exempt from these policies. As a result, immigrants who are incarcerated by the Washington DOC face double punishment after the completion of their sentencing by being transferred to immigration detention and facing deportation. This campaign would seek to end the collaboration between DOC and ICE.
- Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: La Resistencia, Columbia Legal Services, Survivors Opposing Solitary Coalition, Tsuru for Solidarity, Never Again Action, Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW, and others
- Reasoning to include in Secondary Policy Platform:
  - Alignment with WAISN's Mission, Core Values, and Analytical Frameworks: This campaign aligns with the WAISN mission, vision, analytical frameworks, and issue area model because it seeks to increase the freedom, safety, and access of immigrants in our state who have been criminalized. We are against deportations and detention of all immigrants regardless of their personal history.
  - Priority of Immigrant and Refugee Communities and WAISN Membership: Ending immigration detention is a priority for immigrant and refugee communities and many of our partner and member organizations.
  - Addressing Policy Focus Area:
    - Keeping Our Communities Safe by ending prolonged detention which can increase the likelihood of deportation. Immigration detention is dangerous and has led to the death of many.
    - Protecting Our Rights by ending the double punishment that immigrants



and refugees who have been criminalized face. People who have criminal history face harsh consequences in the immigration system, including longer time in detention.

- *Cohesion with WAISN's Strengths and Superpowers*: WAISN has been a member of the coalition to shut down the Northwest Detention Center and helped pass and ensure the successful implementation of Keep Washington Working and Courts Working for All. Supporting efforts to close the loophole of collaboration between DOC and ICE is a continuation of that work. Additionally, through our deportation defense work and Fair Fight Bond Fund, WAISN has a direct line to community members who are impacted by this issue.

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### ***Domestic Workers Bill of Rights***

- Summary: Expands labor protections for domestic workers to ensure nannies, house cleaners, home health care workers, and others are paid minimum wage, receive necessary breaks and days off, and have protections from retaliation and other abusive labor practices.
- Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: WA Domestic Workers Coalition, Casa Latina, Fair Work Center, Working Washington, ALA Garifuna
- Reasoning to include in Secondary Policy Platform:
  - *Alignment with WAISN's Mission, Core Values, and Analytical Frameworks*: This campaign strengthens the power of immigrants and refugees who are employed as domestic workers. Additionally, the domestic work sphere is strongly gendered and immigrant and refugee women are one of the primary demographics of domestic workers.
  - *Priority of Immigrant and Refugee Communities and WAISN Membership*: Many immigrant and refugee workers are employed as domestic workers and improved labor protections are a key priority for our communities and member organizations.
  - *Addressing Policy Focus Area*:
    - Protecting Our Rights through expanding basic labor protections to a large portion of the workforce.
    - Meeting Our Basic Needs by strengthening the economic standing and security of domestic workers.
  - *Cohesion with WAISN's Strengths and Superpowers*: WAISN can leverage our statewide network and connection to community members to demonstrate the



need and support for this campaign.

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### ***Newly Arrived Migrants Support***

- **Summary:** In the last few years, Washington State has seen a growing population of migrants who have recently arrived in the country and are seeking asylum. This population is arriving without strong connections to existing community support or resources to navigate the immigration system and meet their basic needs. In the most recent session, **we won \$32 million for support**, including for the creation of a resource hub for newcomers. For the upcoming session, we plan to request increased funding.
- **Organizations & Coalitions in Support include:** Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, OneAmerica, Entre Hermanos, Low Income Housing Alliance, Washington State Coalition of African Community Leaders, Washington West African Center, Congolese Integration Network, Casa Latina, Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice Northwest and many others.
- **Reasoning to include in Secondary Policy Platform:**
  - **Alignment with WAISN's Mission, Core Values, and Analytical Frameworks:** Meeting the needs of the growing population of newly arrived migrants advances our organizational mission to support all immigrant and refugee communities and also provides an opportunity for Washington state to challenge harmful anti-immigrant rhetoric that scapegoats asylum seekers to the detriment of all immigrants.
  - **Priority of Immigrant and Refugee Communities and WAISN Membership:** WAISN has been involved in advocating for newly arrived migrants and has heard directly from many migrants and member organizations about the importance of continuing to support.
  - **Addressing Policy Focus Area:**
    - **Meeting Our Basic Needs** by dedicating resources for housing, legal assistance, education and employment, and other needs for new migrants in Washington.
    - **Keeping Our Communities Safe** through expanding legal assistance for newly arrived migrants, the majority of who are seeking asylum and fear deportation.
  - **Cohesion with WAISN's Strengths and Superpowers:** As a statewide network, WAISN is able to convene partners, support the demonstration of need, and provide guidance on the messaging for this campaign and how it connects to other issues.



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## ***Ending the Long-Term Use of Solitary Confinement***

- **Summary**: Restricting the use of solitary confinement in state correctional facilities and long-term private detention facilities—including the Northwest Detention Center—only when there is no other safe means of preventing harm to facility staff or incarcerated individuals. The restrictions would necessitate a process for less restrictive detention to be tried first, clear documentation, limits on the length of time in solitary confinement, and allowing people to still have access to programming following the end of solitary confinement.
- **Organizations & Coalitions in Support include**: La Resistencia, Columbia Legal Services, Survivors Opposing Solitary Coalition, Tsuru for Solidarity, Never Again Action, Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW, and others.
- **Reasoning to include in Secondary Policy Platform**:
  - **Alignment with WAISN’s Mission, Core Values, and Analytical Frameworks**: This campaign takes steps to keep our community members who have been criminalized in safer conditions. Immigrants who are in detention often face solitary confinement as retribution for speaking out about unsafe conditions. This is an issue that also disproportionately affects trans women and is aligned with our mission and focus area priorities.
  - **Priority of Immigrant and Refugee Communities and WAISN Membership**: The death of Charles Leo Daniel in solitary confinement while at the Northwest Detention Center demonstrated that it is imperative to restrict and impose changes to the misuse of solitary confinement in detention facilities.
  - **Addressing Policy Focus Area**:
    - **Keeping Our Communities Safe** by implementing measures to limit as much as possible the use of solitary confinement in correctional facilities and detention centers in Washington State.
  - **Cohesion with WAISN’s Strengths and Superpowers**: Through our deportation defense work and Fair Fight Bond Fund, WAISN has a direct line to community members who are impacted by this issue.

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## ***State Legal Defense Fund***

- **Summary**: Including funding in the biennium budget for legal services to navigate the immigration and naturalization system.



- Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, OneAmerica, Asian Counseling and Referral Service, and others.
  - Reasoning to include in Secondary Policy Platform:
    - Alignment with WAISN's Mission, Core Values, and Analytical Frameworks: Ensuring access to representation for immigrants is a primary way to support our immigrant and refugee communities and advance the power and dignity of these communities in Washington.
    - Priority of Immigrant and Refugee Communities and WAISN Membership: Community members have highlighted access to immigration legal representation as a primary need.
    - Addressing Policy Focus Area:
      - **Keeping Our Communities Safe** by providing resources for our community members to navigate the immigration system and prevent deportations.
      - **Increasing Access and Agency** by ensuring that immigrants have access to legal representation so they do not have to navigate a complex and life-changing process alone if they do not have the resources to pay for an attorney.
    - Cohesion with WAISN's Strengths and Superpowers: WAISN partners with many civil legal aid partners to increase access for our communities to receive education about, support with, and direct representation in navigating the immigration system. Through our Hotline, one of the primary asks we hear is for a connection to legal aid.
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### **Traffic Safety for All**

- Summary: This bill deprioritizes traffic stops for non-safety-related reasons to help law enforcement better enforce traffic laws that pose a serious threat to driver safety. It also establishes a grant to support local initiatives that provide solution-oriented responses to nonmoving violations for low-income road users.
- Organizations & Coalitions in Support: Washington Coalition for Police Accountability, ACLU-WA, ACRS, CAIR-WA, Columbia Legal Services, El Centro de la Raza, League of Women Voters, NWIRP, OneAmerica, Pacific Islander Community Association of WA, People Power WA, WA Community Alliance, Washington Defender Association, Washington for Black Lives, and others.
- Reasoning to include in Secondary Policy Platform:
  - Alignment with WAISN's Mission, Core Values, and Analytical Frameworks: This



campaign protects the rights, dignity, and power of immigrant and refugee communities in an intersectional way by providing crucial reform to the criminal legal system while incorporating economic justice in creating resources for community-based alternatives to keep our communities safe.

- *Priority of Immigrant and Refugee Communities and WAISN Membership:* Members of the community have reported to us how traffic stops have led to negative consequences for their immigration status, including detention and deportation. Additionally, many WAISN member organizations have endorsed this campaign in prior sessions.
- *Addressing Policy Focus Area:*
  - **Keeping our Communities Safe** by reducing interactions with law enforcement which can result in our community members falling into the detention and deportation pipeline or encountering police brutality.
  - **Meeting Our Basic Needs and Improving Access & Agency** through a grant program that will support low-income community members with information and resources to repair vehicles and pay for registration fees rather than face expensive fines for non-moving violations.
- *Cohesion with WAISN's Strengths and Superpowers:* WAISN can amplify the voices of immigrant and refugee communities impacted by this issue and help highlight the intersections between criminal justice and immigrant justice.

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## ***TERTIARY POLICY PLATFORM***

### **Healthy Home Repairs**

Hundreds of thousands of people in Washington State need urgent repairs to their homes—and work can be done to preserve housing stock, improve indoor air quality and thermal comfort, reduce energy use and housing cost burden, and decarbonize fuel sources. Jobs doing these badly needed home repairs are overwhelmingly popular across the state, especially in rural communities where we've faced decades of disinvestment. Home repairs create good jobs of meaningful work taking care of our neighbors, with opportunities for on-the-job career advancement into mechanical, electrical, plumbing, assessment, and evaluation fields. This campaign seeks to invest resources into the Weatherization Plus Health fund to expand the home repair program.

*Organizations & Coalitions in Support include:* Firelands

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### **Permanent Fund for Housing Trust Fund**



Increasing the supply of affordable housing by modifying the state and local real estate excise tax. Increasing affordable housing is a need that will benefit our community members and is in alignment with our mission and values.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Balance Our Tax Code Coalition

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### **Transit Oriented Development**

Advancing transit-oriented development projects that meet the needs of our current and future neighbors by increasing capacity, ensuring affordability, supporting community-led development, and balancing rapid implementation with local government flexibility. This will benefit immigrant and refugee communities by increasing affordable housing and creating more accessible communities.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Washington Community Alliance

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### **School Meals for All**

Fully funding Free School Meals so that all children in Washington State can benefit aims to meet the basic needs of low-income families and make our education system more beneficial and accessible. Immigrants, often more than anyone else, endure disproportionately higher rates of hunger and food insecurity.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition, Latino Community Fund, Progreso, United Way of King County

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### **Pay Pathways for Undocumented Students**

Additional state support is needed for undocumented postsecondary students. The Communities for Our Colleges Coalition is currently working on a campaign to create a program modeled after California programs while considering the specific needs of undocumented students.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Communities for our Colleges

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### **Universal Childcare**

This campaign aims to create accessible, inclusive, and culturally responsive childcare for all families, irrespective of income or immigration status. It will support fair wages and benefits for childcare workers and increase funding and resources for childcare programs and initiatives that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: OneAmerica



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## **Ensuring Free Public K-12 Education for all Students**

The Washington State Coalition for Language Access is concerned about a rising issue with language access impacts for both students and families, namely protecting the right of all children and youth in Washington to free public K-12 education. In the face of mounting efforts which have begun in Texas to move a proposed state law to the national level to get the Supreme Court to reverse the 1981 Plyler v. Doe decision which established the right of students to a public education regardless of their immigration status. While we have Chapter 392-190 WAC which prohibits discrimination in WA public schools, it does not mention immigration status. We recommend that the WA law be revised to specifically add the right of resident students to free public education regardless of their immigration status or the status of their parent(s)/guardian(s).

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Washington State Coalition for Language Access

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## **Free College for All**

Communities for Our Colleges is a multi-racial student-centered coalition in Washington State of students, faculty, staff, and community members fighting to advance racial and economic equity at community & technical colleges with the long-term goal of making sure that Washington State fully funds higher education. Higher education is a public good that advances our fundamental values of democracy but has been historically underfunded. The short-term goal is to make college free for all through free tuition, wraparound support, and creating a welcoming environment for students. C4C's legislative agenda includes a focus on making the first two years free at 2- and 4-year colleges.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Communities for our Colleges

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## **Juvenile Sentencing Reform**

In the 2023 session, the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed into law EHB 1324, which stopped the practice of automatically giving people longer sentences because of prior juvenile adjudications, while still maintaining the ability for judges to see and consider a person's juvenile record in sentencing. However, this bill was not retroactive, denying relief to people who are currently incarcerated. Juvenile sentencing reform will make the 2023 EHB 1324 retroactive. Additionally, will seek to increase the age for sentence review consideration from 18 to 25, which aligns state code with modern brain science, decreases incarceration costs, and meaningfully advances efforts to address racial disparities in sentencing

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: ACLU-WA

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## **Eliminating Isolation & Restraint in Schools**

Eliminate the practice of isolation of students in schools and make the use of restraint safer by eliminating both mechanical and chemical restraints in Washington schools. Restraint and isolation are framed as practices that help keep students safe, but they have lasting detrimental effects on students, which fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable students in our state: students with disabilities, Black, multiracial, homeless, low-income, elementary, male, and foster care-involved students. Students and families reported time and time again that the use of these tactics is common, sometimes even daily experiences, even though Washington law requires restraint and isolation to be rare.

*Organizations & Coalitions in Support include:* ACLU-WA, Disability Rights WA

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## **Washington Future Fund (Baby Bonds)**

Breaking the cycle of poverty for WA families by setting aside \$4,000 for each child born in WA who uses Apple Health services in their first year of life.

*Organizations & Coalitions in Support include:* Balance Our Tax Code Coalition

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## **Repeal Parents Bill of Rights**

A coalition of organizations has filed a lawsuit against I-2081 (The Parents Bill of Rights). If it doesn't get overturned via litigation, the coalition will try to amend or push for a repeal through the legislature. This initiative requires public school materials—including textbooks, curriculum, and medical records—to be available for review by parents and allows parents to opt their children out of certain activities. However, the goal of the initiative is to ban education around LGBTQ+ topics as well as issues of race and diversity which can cause harm to LGBTQ+ students who do not have supportive parents.

*Organizations & Coalitions in Support include:* QLaw Foundation

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## **Attorney General Investigation and Reform Bill**

Creating a mechanism of accountability for law enforcement agencies who are engaging in practices that violate the civil rights of our communities, including by violating laws like Keep Washington Working, to face consequences and change their policies to restore safety in our communities. This is aligned with our priorities and mission and continues the important work to add an enforcement component to Keep Washington Working.

*Organizations & Coalitions in Support include:* Washington Coalition for Police Accountability

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### **Independent Investigations for Police Violence**

Establishing a mechanism for independent prosecutions within the Office of the Attorney General of criminal conduct arising from police use of force. This campaign supports the safety of our community members by creating accountability measures when law enforcement violates their civil rights. It is aligned with our focus area priorities.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Washington Coalition for Police Accountability

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### **Immigrant Post-Conviction Relief Services**

Funding for legal services for immigrant post-conviction relief is vital for many longtime residents of Washington State who face deportation or other immigration consequences because of criminal convictions. Currently, there is no public funding for this work and no free legal services, other than what is provided through the assistance of volunteer lawyers.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Seattle Clemency Project, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, Washington Defender Association

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### **Deferred Action Labor Enforcement Protection Support**

Workers who take action against employers violating labor laws can be eligible for temporary federal immigration protections via deferred action. This program is a valuable tool for ensuring the protection of all workers. This campaign seeks funding in the state budget to ensure immigrant workers are aware of this program and receive support to apply for deferred action.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Fair Work Center, Washington State Labor Council, NWIRP

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### **Unemployment Insurance for Striking Workers**

Grants up to four weeks of unemployment insurance benefits to people who are unemployed due to a labor strike in order to level the playing field between workers and employers who refuse to negotiate fairly and allows low-wage workers to exercise the right to strike.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: SEIU 6, Washington State Labor Council

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### **Expanding Working Families Tax Credit**

This bill would expand the WFTC to include all adults 18 years or older, extending the current age range of 25-65 years. We believe that all people, regardless of age, should benefit from the WFTC.



Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Balance Our Tax Code Coalition

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### **Wealth Tax**

Investing in Washington families and creating a more fair tax system by enacting a narrowly tailored property tax on extreme wealth derived from the ownership of stocks, bonds, and other financial intangible property.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Balance Our Tax Code Coalition, Washington Community Alliance

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### **Guaranteed Basic Income**

Establishing the Evergreen Basic Income Pilot Program (pilot program), providing 24 monthly payments of up to \$7,500 to qualifying participants in an amount equal to 100% of the fair market rent for a two-bedroom dwelling unit in the county in which a participant resides. This campaign is in alignment with our values and we support the goals of this campaign as one of the top priorities of our communities is support with meeting basic needs, especially housing.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Balance Our Tax Code Coalition

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### **Keep Our Care Act**

Ensuring health entity mergers, acquisitions, and contracting affiliations improve rather than harm access to affordable, quality care within a community. This campaign will ensure our communities have access to affordable healthcare, which is a basic need.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: QLaw Foundation, ACLU-WA, Pro-Choice Washington

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### **Dual & Tribal Language Programs**

Increasing funding for dual and tribal language programs in schools to continue inclusive curriculum and creating culturally responsive environments for non-English speaking students.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: OneAmerica

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### **Closing the Gift Card Loophole**

Close a loophole that allows big corporations to keep unspent gift card money as corporate profit, returning \$255 million per year to the general fund to support schools, roads, and community health.



Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Balance Our Tax Code Coalition

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### **People's Privacy Act**

Creating a charter of people's personal data rights that would prohibit companies from collecting, using, or selling people's information without their freely given opt-in consent; make it unlawful for companies and government agencies to use people's personal information to discriminate against them; require companies to conduct data protection assessments; and empower people to enforce their privacy rights and make violations of the law a violation of the Consumer Protection Act. This bill relates to our focus areas of Increasing Access and Agency as well as Protecting Our Rights and is in alignment with the mission, vision, and analytical frameworks. Protecting personal data rights is of particular importance to immigrant as well as trans and queer communities who may be targeted due to privacy violations.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: ACLU WA

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### **Electoral Language Access**

This legislation requires counties to provide language assistance during elections when more than 2.5 percent of voting-age citizens in certain language minority groups in the county do not speak or understand English adequately enough to participate in the electoral process and have not completed the fifth grade at a rate higher than the national average. It also mandates the Secretary of State to determine which counties are subject to these language assistance provisions.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Latino Community Fund of Washington State

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### **WA Office of Language Access**

A centralized Office for Language Access would go a long way in ensuring consistent, effective, and equitable access to state agency programs and services by providing critical oversight and accountability, technical assistance and coordination across state agencies, helping agencies adapt to evolving language needs and demographic changes within the state, improve outreach and engagement with diverse communities, ensure compliance with federal nondiscrimination requirements, and achieve economies of scale by reducing costs associated with translation and interpretation services.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Washington State Coalition for Language Access

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## **Expanding Court Interpreters**

In many places across Washington, there are not enough certified interpreters to meet the needs of people with limited English proficiency or people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Without an interpreter who speaks their language, people can be cut off from the legal resources they need. This bill lowers this language barrier by expanding the pool of language interpreters who may be appointed by the court.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Washington State Coalition for Language Access

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## **People Powered Elections WA**

Establishing the democracy voucher program for contributions to state legislative candidates. This campaign is related to increasing access and agency in elections, one of our platform focus areas. Making it easier for people who are not wealthy to contribute to campaigns will allow elected officials to be more responsive to the needs of our communities.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Fix Democracy First, League of Women Voters of Washington, Northwest Progressive Institute, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, Washington for Equitable Representation, The Washington Bus

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## **Repealing Concealed Birth Statute**

The statute makes concealing birth a misdemeanor. While it hasn't been enforced or used in the modern era, there is no reason for it to be on the books, and misdemeanors have disproportionate consequences for immigrant communities that are often overpoliced and underserved.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Legal Voice

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## **Certification Requirements for Law Enforcement**

Require sheriffs to undergo background checks in order to qualify for candidacy and placement on the ballot. Police chiefs, reserve officers, and town marshalls would also be required to undergo background checks.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: Washington Coalition for Police Accountability

## **Guard Card Change for Security Officers**

Reforming a process for security officers to reduce the costs of certification for workers.

Organizations & Coalitions in Support include: SEIU 6



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## **All Campaigns for Consideration by Policy Focus Area**

For reference, below is a chart listing out all the campaigns being considered for the secondary and tertiary platform categorized by policy focus areas. (*Note: Campaigns marked with an asterisk (\*) appear under more than one category.*)

### **Keeping Our Communities Safe**

- **Policing and Criminalization**
  - Traffic Safety for All
  - Attorney General Investigation and Reform Bill
  - Independent Investigations for Police Violence
  - Repealing Concealed Birth Statute\*
  - Eliminating Isolation & Restraint in Schools\*
  - Juvenile Sentencing Reform\*
  - Certification Requirements for Law Enforcement
- **Immigration Enforcement and Detention**
  - Addressing DOC & ICE Collaboration
  - Ending the Long-Term Use of Solitary Confinement\*
- **Community-Based Alternatives and Resources to Navigate the Criminal Legal and Immigration Systems, including Funding for Legal Assistance**
  - Immigrant Post-Conviction Relief Services
  - State Legal Defense Fund
  - Deferred Action Labor Enforcement Protection Support\*
  - Newly Arrived Migrants Support\*

### **Meeting Our Basic Needs**

- **Healthcare**
  - Keep Our Care Act\*
- **Housing**
  - Healthy Home Repairs\*
  - Permanent Fund for Housing Trust Fund
  - Transit Oriented Development\*
  - Newly Arrived Migrants Support\*
  - Rent Stabilization
- **Education**
  - School Meals for All\*
  - Dual & Tribal Language Programs\*
  - Free College for All\*
  - Pay Pathways for Undocumented Students\*
  - Ensuring Free Public K-12 Education for all Students
- **Labor & Employment**



- Pay Pathways for Undocumented Students\*
- Guard Card Change for Security Officers
- Universal Childcare\*
- Domestic Workers Bill of Rights\*
- Wealth Tax
- Expanding Working Families Tax Credit
- Washington Future Fund (Baby Bonds)
- Guaranteed Basic Income
- Closing the Gift Card Loophole
- Public Benefits & Economic Justice

### ***Protecting Our Rights***

- Protecting Civil Liberties, including free speech and religious freedoms
  - People's Privacy Act\*
  - Attorney General Investigation and Reform Bill
  - Independent Investigations for Police Violence
  - Ending the Long-Term Use of Solitary Confinement\*
- Disability Justice
  - Keep Our Care Act\*
  - Expanding Court Interpreters\*
- Gender Justice
  - Universal Childcare\*
  - Repealing Concealed Birth Statute\*
  - Keep Our Care Act\*
- Trans and Queer Justice
  - Repeal Parents Bill of Rights\*
  - Keep Our Care Act\*
- Support for Indigenous Communities
  - Dual & Tribal Language Programs\*
- Environmental Justice
  - Transit Oriented Development\*
  - Healthy Home Repairs\*
- Youth Protections
  - Repeal Parents Bill of Rights\*
  - Eliminating Isolation & Restraint in Schools\*
  - Juvenile Sentencing Reform\*
- Labor Rights
  - Unemployment Insurance for Striking Workers
  - Universal Childcare\*
  - Deferred Action Labor Enforcement Protection Support\*
  - Domestic Workers Bill of Rights\*

### ***Increasing Access & Agency***

- Language Justice
  - Electoral Language Access\*
  - Dual & Tribal Language Programs\*
  - WA Office of Language Access
  - Expanding Court Interpreters
- Data Privacy
  - People's Privacy Act\*
- Election Participation & Civic Engagement



- People Powered Elections WA
- Electoral Language Access\*
- Equitable Access
  - Transit Oriented Development\*
- Free College for All\*
- State Legal Defense Fund
- Ensuring Free Public K-12 Education for all Students\*
- School Meals for All\*





## Consideration Process

To generate our policy platform, the WAISN team followed [the process and tiers of engagement established in our 2023 Steering Committee Convening](#). For the primary policy platform, we collected and reviewed data from impacted community members including:

- Community Listening Sessions with 30 community members in June 2024;
- Review of data from the 1,210 calls to the WAISN Hotline from Q3 2023 to Q1 2024;
- Membership Survey Data that surveyed more than 65 community members in June 2024; and
- 1:1 conversations with community members and partners throughout Q2 of 2024.

We also considered previous learnings from the Washington Immigrant Relief Fund Survey completed in Q1 2023, Hotline data from Q1-Q2 2023, and the Health Equity Listening Sessions completed in May 2023.

To generate the secondary and tertiary recommendations, the WAISN team circulated a survey to our network of partners and members in our various meeting spaces including the WAISN General Meeting, WAISN Policy Table, the Health Equity for Immigrants General Meeting, the Unemployment Insurance for Undocumented Workers Coalition, and the Newly Arrived Migrants Support Coalition. We also made personalized calls to key stakeholders including our Steering Committee and active policy partners to ensure that our list was comprehensive.

All potential campaign or policy considerations were then put through our *criteria for selection*:

- Does this campaign align with our **mission** of supporting the rights, dignity, and power of immigrants and refugees in Washington state?
- Does it align with our **core values** of accountability, integrity, joy, care, and solidarity across differences?
- Does it align with our feminist, decolonial, intersectional, and transnational **analytical frameworks**?
- Is this a priority of our **directly impacted community** and the **WAISN membership**?
- Does it address one of our four **policy focus areas**: Keeping Our Communities Safe, Meeting Our Basic Needs, Protecting Our Rights, and Increasing Access and Agency
- We also think about **WAISN's superpowers** and where we can make the most impact – What would we be bringing that others can't or won't?

Finally, WAISN convened our Steering Committee, the body that provides strategic visioning, advice, and support to WAISN on policy. Steering Committee members discussed the recommendations submitted by WAISN staff and voted to formalize the platform as detailed above.



## **Citation Descriptions**

### **2023 WAISN Hotline Data**

Our Resources & Partnerships team developed three data reports from community member calls to the WAISN Hotline, covering demographics, resource needs, and deportation defense immigration calls. The data in these reports spans from late 2022 through the entirety of 2023 and includes information from 8,358 intakes.

### **2022 Washington Immigrant Relief Fund Survey**

The Washington COVID-19 Immigrant Relief Fund Impact Survey (“WIRF Survey”) was disseminated and circulated through the WAISN Hotline and participating community organizations who worked with directly impacted community members as well as individuals who applied to the 2022 iteration of WIRF and received responses from 2,142 individuals.

### **Unemployment Insurance for Undocumented Workers Hearing Testimonies**

During the 2023 legislative session, WAISN’s Organizing team supported our legislative priorities by identifying community members who wanted to share their testimonies in support of the Unemployment Insurance for Undocumented Workers bill. Twelve directly impacted community members shared their testimonies during legislative hearings.

### **Health Equity Listening Session Report**

WAISN hosted three listening sessions with the goal of hearing directly from impacted undocumented community members who did not identify as Latine/Latinx about challenges and barriers to accessing health care services. These listening sessions occurred in 2023 and included 25 participants who spoke Mam, Q’anjob’al, Russian, and Korean as a primary language as well as folks who are bilingual in English and the following languages; Samoan, Somali, Shona, Swahili, and Wolof.

### **WAISN Policy Listening Session Report 2024**

In June of 2024, WAISN’s Policy & Advocacy team held two separate listening sessions with a total of 26 participants who identified as African, Samoan, and Latine. We recruited community members through widespread invitations to our network and targeted asks to key partners and coalition spaces and selected participants who live in rural and urban communities, whose first language is not English, and who have been impacted by the lack of access to unemployment benefits and limited access to health care coverage due to their immigration status.

### **2024 WAISN Hotline Data**

Our Resources & Partnerships team developed three data reports from community member calls to the WAISN Hotline, covering demographics, resource needs, and deportation defense immigration calls. The data in these reports spans Q1 of 2024 and includes information from 206 intakes.

### **WAISN Membership Survey 2024**

WAISN’s Executive team, in consultation with Collective Liberation Practice, designed and distributed a survey to all of our member and network partners to understand the needs and desires of both impacted community members and partners to inform strategic planning for the organization and programmatic investments. The survey was fielded throughout the month of June 2024 and received over 65 responses.

### **WAISN Policy Partner Organizational Survey 2024**

According to WAISN’s protocol for developing our secondary and tertiary policy priorities,



WAISN's Policy & Advocacy team distributes a Policy Partner Organizational Survey, every year in the months of June and July. This survey asks that partners submit their policy priorities for the upcoming legislative session for consideration by WAISN and the Steering Committee at the annual Steering Committee Convening. This survey was fielded throughout the month of June 2024 and received submissions from 25 organizations.

*Washington State Office of Financial Management May 2023 Report: [Washington state's immigrant population: 2010-21](#)*

