

# **Social Justice Collection: Immigration Rights and Resources**

## **E- Resources: Collection Development**

University of Washington iSchool

**Carolyn Callaghan, Micah Love, Diane Mello**

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### ***Introduction***

Our collection consists of free, open access, online sources and services related to Immigration rights and resources that will address the needs of our academic library's graduate and undergraduate users by providing access points to public services, local advocacy groups, and reference tools that can support immigrant students within our larger community of King County, WA. As an academic library serving a large public university, our collection's purpose is to serve the curricular and scholarly research needs of our staff and students. But with a large, diverse undergraduate population of roughly 20,000 students, we always aim to serve our users' information needs at the intersecting points of their multidimensional identities and community memberships. The academic mission of our university and library is only fully achieved when all students have access not just to our programming for academic support but have equal access to support for their personal, financial, health, and community needs in order for them to succeed.

We recognize that many of our students of Immigrant experience face specific barriers to success related to legal status, language usage, and access to fair work opportunities. As an institution, we host roughly 8,000 International Students, an estimated 200 undocumented students, and a large population of students of East Asian descent that mirrors the largest

concentration of Immigrants in King County, where almost 20% of residents are foreign born (Seattle OIRA). In a time of acute economic and social uncertainty, students who are first-generation immigrants, refugees, asylees, International students, and undocumented students all face additional precarity in terms of meeting their basic needs and achieving stability and safety within our community. While our university services and campus outreach offers some social and legal counsel, this new collection strives to connect students to the wealth of online off-campus Immigration resources, programs, and advocacy groups in larger King County that can supplement and surpass what the University offers, and ensure that academic inclusion and access is possible to all our students regardless of immigration status.

While available to all university students, our collection proactively supports access for potentially marginalized community members and their families. Our collection draws from local and federal government resources, local library programs, “Know Your Rights” legal information, citizenship references, and financial aid resources that all help empower students to maneuver within the difficult academic, legal, and financial systems involved with navigating their varied immigration statuses - along with student life. In doing so, we’ve prioritized online sources that are current, easy to navigate, originate from trusted public institutions, emphasize advocacy and allyship, and are immediately applicable to serving student needs. Since COVID-19 has reduced a lot of the services and outreach that might have specifically served these groups, and as national policy on immigration changes during a transition of federal administrations, our discovery indicates that existing resources on this topic are not sufficiently updated to reflect this rapidly changing information landscape. Within our institution, collections on similar topics, the library’s existing academic databases, and collections at our University law library host news sources, legal and academic research, and other valuable commentaries on

immigration, but there can be considerable barriers for beginner use with these sources, especially to English Language Learners. These collections were not as valuable to us in their currency and applicability as the immediate connections to access points for community assistance programs for accessing affordable housing, food, and the internet that we aimed to collect for these purposes.

### ***Process Summary***

The E-resource guide, Social Justice Collection: Immigration Rights and Resources, was established November 7, 2020 by authors, Carolyn Callaghan, Micah Love, and Diane Mello. At the onset, the group undertook a collaborative approach by establishing consensus with establishment of synchronous and asynchronous work environments specifically, weekly ZOOM meetings, personal calendars, synched communication and development tools (MSTeams and Google Drive), and established roles, objectives, goals, and division of labor through a thoroughly developed team contract.

As a guide based on major free reference resources in electronic format we did not require discussion for license or vendor support, therefore we focused our search process on identifying e-resources based on the criteria that are relevant to our audience's local and demographic characteristics, have practical application, direct entry points, focus on advocacy and allyship, and direct students to public and community services. As per our scope, we looked for sources that help students easily access and identify resources across their university institution and King County community. Our processes overlapped searches related to pathways to citizenship, economic and labor rights, and cultural or language resources. In addition to practical resources, like accessing the formal immigration documentation process for obtaining driver's licenses or social security numbers, our inclusion-based topics included the practical

resources necessary to thrive personally, professionally and educationally.

Our approach involved identifying key resource groups based on our user needs as both students and immigrants: legal, health-based, pathways to citizenship, access to academic or educational opportunities from the perspective of different user groups like International students or refugees, language resources for English Language Learners, and resources for housing or food insecurity. Based on these subject headings for the kinds of resources we were looking for, we evaluated these sources for content, suitability and intersectionality. We discovered overlapping issues regarding audience and purpose. Identifying trusted partners and advocates to include in this collection could be difficult when considering how potentially politicized federal government data and reference resources could be. However, as the primary source of operational and support components for immigration, the federal website for the United States Citizen and Immigration Services, became prominent. As a result, we debated relevance for selection of local, state and federal sources as best matches for students. We concluded the USCIS website would become the foundational source to build geographical specific sources around but provide the bulk of resources from local and state agencies. But these materials could often be presented within dense legal and policy language, and leave students with difficulties for translating those policies into resources and discovery of access points. Therefore, we often defaulted to local and state organizations that stated clear missions for serving Immigrant communities, ideally with considerable input from stakeholders that are themselves immigrants. For instance, Washington State-specific financial aid opportunities exist that are more inclusive to undocumented students than national standards, and many resources on “Know Your Rights” materials are produced by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which we didn’t feel passed our selection criteria for advocacy and anti-discrimination.

Our annotations avoided all use of pejorative language terms. At times we discovered offensive language by local agencies, namely the State Food Assistance Program (FAP) with the Washington State Department of Social and Human Services, who continue to use the Washington legislative language (WAC 388-400-0050) of the term “aliens” to refer to lawful immigrants who’d be eligible for the Washington Basic Food program. Another controversial category of resource that originated in our source materials was the way that government agencies often use the outdated term “assimilation” in association with necessary skills and legal achievements such as obtaining a driver's license or social security card. These documents of identification enable students towards efficacy as fully participating citizens, but we felt that within our mission to empower our student users, we wanted to instead emphasize access because of the way these benchmarks for “skills” or “achievements” often act more as barriers. As a result, we differentiate and attempt to identify and present sources which are discoverable, in a variety of components due to varying language use, and act as access points to these administrative processes. Similarly, finding trusted visa information for International Students that were not just institutionally-specific was also challenging because of how vulnerable and exploited this group of students can be by for-profit groups.

### ***Summary & Reflection***

The emergence of COVID-19 as a major source of disruption and destabilization – globally and locally – required our team to consider the tangible, material benefits each resource could provide our target audience. As we further defined the intent and scope of our collection, we discovered how easily certain entry points (e.g. healthcare, housing/utilities, food security, technology lending programs and discounts) naturally overlapped and intersected with others (e.g. immigration status, language(s) spoken, institutional support/ease of navigability), lending

further credence to the understanding that our given collection would prioritize accessibility as one of its expressed advocacies. Our search process yielded significant results spanning and including most of these subjects, requiring focused research alongside a social justice mindset.

This approach forced us to contend with the ways and means through which certain privileges – specifically common language use, meaning, and colloquialisms associated with a shared geographic region and/or historical era – are manifested in American-created web interfaces and databases. As students lacking the experience of being an immigrant in a foreign country, how do we determine which keywords or search terms would be best matches for use by our audience? How would these be used to locate a specific content need? It begs the question: How integral is the need for community voice and engagement to our collection and its development? Would the inclusion of additional voices help to develop better practices – including, ultimately, a better deliverable? While our team leaned towards the affirmative on these questions, they quickly discovered the necessity of weighing multiple, varying priorities with information distribution among organizations and their website content. At the same time this discovery allowed them to see the power to complicate access and expand new challenges to be inclusive for our audience.

## ANNOTATIONS

### Reference Sources:

1. **United States Customs and Immigration Services** <https://www.uscis.gov/home>

USCIS is the Federal government agency that administers lawful immigration to the United States by adjudicating requests for immigration benefits. For the purposes of the Immigrants' Rights and Resources collection, we selected this source as a broad and foundational resource of legal framework in which to supplement sources specific to our audience and scope.

Three USCIS directorates are useful for our users 1) Immigration Records and Identity Services: National Records Center, Identification and Information Management and Verification. 2) Field Operations: National Benefits Center and regions - Southeast, Northeast, Central, and Western United States. 3) Refugee, Asylum and International Operations: Adjudication Program Coordination and International and Refugee Affairs Division.

The USCIS website homepage assimilates and displays these departments through quickly, identifiable cues to navigate and access specifics through hotlink text, topic headers and images. Engagement with materials is driven by the user's needs for educational, research and record verification; however, facilitation with the steps of management and submission of an application with the immigration process is available.

*Home | USCIS.* <https://www.uscis.gov/>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020

2. **Seattle City Immigration Resources, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA)** <https://www.seattle.gov/iandraffairs>

As an online hub for regional news, local laws and policies, and resources for citizenship, financial assistance and language classes, the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) is a great starting point for students to review the available community services in Seattle. OIRA is mostly an aggregation of other services and programs, but this resource offers a clear menu for links to connect low-income students to key resources for achieving safety and stability, including condensed resource guides for health care, mental health care, LGBT+ resources, shelters, and legal assistance as well as utility bill financial assistance, renter and housing information, and other discounted services like internet access and transportation. Users of any immigration status can locate help through this collection, including links to local refugee assistance agencies and DACA information last updated December 7, 2020.

*Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs - landRaffairs | Seattle.Gov.*  
<https://www.seattle.gov/iandraffairs>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

3. **Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network Resource Finder** <https://waisn.herokuapp.com>

The WAISN Resource Finder is a community-driven resource highlighting available pandemic-related services throughout Washington state. Managed by community volunteers associated with the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network, the Resource Finder serves a wide and diverse audience – primarily immigrants and refugees – regardless of origin. While not exhaustive, it remains a solid database for immigrants and refugees directly impacted by the spread of COVID-19. Points of access

include two drop down menus (titled: 'Resource Category' and Location), and one 'Keyword' search function. Users can access resources by selecting from these menus, depending on subject/topic. The Resource Category drop down menu features topics ranging from COVID-19 testing to DACA resources. The website's operational language is English; however, each entry features an indicated 'language(s) available/spoken' section to assist non-English speakers.

*Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network Resource Finder | WAISN.* <https://waisn.herokuapp.com>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

## Legal Resources

### 4. **iAmerica Know Your Rights** <http://iamerica.org/know-your-rights>.

The most comprehensive and simplified collection of legal information surrounding common encounters with Immigration or ICE, iAmerica's "Know Your Rights" resource offers a catalog of visual resources, printable cards, and downloadable pages for phones. iAmerica is a coalition of diverse immigrant rights groups and The "Know Your Rights" catalog is among one of the most current and applicable. Available in nine translations and covering ten specific situations, pages are mostly framed as "What to do if immigration or the police" encounter the user under circumstances like coming to the user's home, workplace, or stopping them while driving. These resources are meant to be easily accessible in the moment but also provide descriptive, clear recommendations and clarifications of law and policy that can empower anyone in their interactions with law enforcement.

*Know Your Rights | iAmerica.* <http://iamerica.org/know-your-rights>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

## Recent Legislation

### 4a) **Citizen Civics Test: Revised 12/2020** <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/2020test>

*The 2020 Version of the Civics Test | USCIS.* 10 Dec. 2020, <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/2020test>.

### 4b) **Restoration of DACA program: Revised 12/7/2020** <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/12/07/update-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals>

"Update: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals." *Department of Homeland Security*, 7 Dec. 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/12/07/update-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals>.

## Health Resources

### 5. **Fall COVID-19 Resource Guide for Students and Families** <https://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/blog/programs-services/covid-19-resources-for-students-and-families/>

The Fall COVID-19 Resource Guide provided by the College Success Foundation offers a thorough listing of programs and services designed to help underserved students – and their families – navigate WA state's K-Higher Ed. landscape. College students will find tools and services ranging from financial aid planning and applications, to searchable lists linking to college and university COVID-19 response info. Additional resources are available for immigrants and undocumented individuals, including links to



COVID-19 relief funds, healthcare access, and the aforementioned WAISN Resource Finder (Reference Resource #4, above). Statewide and additional COVID-19 resources for protecting one's health can also be found. The website is easily navigable, featuring a categorized list of resources and their corresponding links to different COVID-19 related programs. Guide was last updated: December 8, 2020.

*Fall COVID-19 Resource Guide for Students and Families | College Success Foundation.*

<https://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/blog/programs-services/covid-19-resources-for-students-and-families/>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

## **Socio-economic Resources**

### **6. Utility Discount Program** <https://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/services-and-programs/supporting-affordability-and-livability/utility-discount-program>

The Utility Discount Program (UDP), offered through the Seattle Human Services Department, allows eligible customers to apply for a 60% discount on their Seattle City Light bill and a 50% discount on their Seattle Public Utilities bill. The program is also available for income-qualified residential households. For students within the selected target demographic(s), such programs can offer much-needed relief. Eligibility Requirements for the 2021 year are currently listed. Users may access a drop-down menu to the top right of the website to select their preferred or spoken language, including Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese (there are eighteen languages available, total). The application can be completed online, with phone and online assistance available, if needed.

*Utility Discount Program | Seattle Human Services Department.*

<https://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/services-and-programs/supporting-affordability-and-livability/utility-discount-program>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

### **7. Low-Cost Internet Access for Seattle Residents:**

<https://www.seattle.gov/tech/services/internet-access/low-cost-home-internet-access-for-residents>

The transition to remote or online work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has rendered a reliable Internet/WiFi connection all the more necessary. For students impacted by the shift to online learning, maintaining a solid Internet connection has become an indispensable component of one's academic planning and success. This program helps users access affordable internet service at discounted prices through Comcast, Wave, InterConnection, and PCs for People (offered through Sprint LTE). Laptops, desktop computers, and tablets – in addition to discounted smartphone plans – are also available. The webpage may be translated for up to nineteen languages, including Amharic, Korean, Somali, and Spanish.

*Low-Cost Internet Access for Seattle Residents | Seattle Information Technology.*

<https://www.seattle.gov/tech/services/internet-access/low-cost-home-internet-access-for-residents>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

### **8. Food Insecurity Resources, DSHS**

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/program-summary/food-assistance-program-legal-immigrants-fap>

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services offers the Food Assistance Program - FAP - as a state-funded program that provides food assistance to legal immigrants who aren't eligible for federal benefits, such as federally-funded Washington Basic Food or state-funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). A page of "clarifying information" on this policy includes a chart listing different eligibility categories if a student meets all food requirements for the Basic Food program except citizenship. From this reference source, though, users have to go to a separate portal at Washington Connection (<https://www.washingtonconnection.org/home/>) that adds an additional bureaucratic layer of links to actual register for these benefits, including screening questions and creating an account in order to find and apply for these services through DSHS.

*Food Assistance Program for Legal Immigrants (FAP) | DSHS.*

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/program-summary/food-assistance-program-legal-immigrants-fap>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

## Language Resources

9. **King County Library System Welcoming Center** <https://kcls.org/welcoming-center/>  
Additional to its Welcoming Center for "immigrants, refugees, and new arrivals," the King County Library System offers one of the region's most language-diverse collections. The Welcoming Center features a lot of traditional language-learner resources online, including ESL classes and virtual "Talk Time" conversational English practice, but it also operates as an access point to connect with a Welcoming Ambassador who directs patrons to individualized immigration social services and information. KCLS's World Languages collection, though, will allow users to fill in some of the gaps in our academic library's offerings with search interfaces in several languages and digital access to audiobooks, databases, international newspapers, and eBooks in languages like Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Korean.

*The Welcoming Center | King County Library System.* <https://kcls.org/welcoming-center/>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

## Student Specific Resources & Financial Aid

10. **International Students Resources** <https://iss.washington.edu/>  
In general, International students operate with a considerable precarity of status and with few sources of federal protections and benefits. Within a landscape of very limited credible, national, nonprofit, and secular resources for International students that aren't hosted by either specific institutions or DHS, the links hosted by the International Student Services page at the University of Washington will translate nearly all of its visa and employment information to any International student at any institution. This free site offers standard F-1, M-1, and J-1 visa information and shortcuts to commonly required forms, like applying for a Social Security Card and links to finding the USCIS processing times for your documents. Online employment orientations for both Curricular Practical Training and Optional Practical Training Programs are linked here, as well as crucial information for students post-graduation, like identifying eligible health insurance programs.

*International Student Services.* <https://iss.washington.edu/>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

11. **Department of Homeland Security (Study in the States)**

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students>

Specific guidelines of the international **student life cycle** are accessible through this portal. From application for Visas, travel to a U.S. port of entry through work and completion of a study program, prospective and current F or M students will be enabled with these processes for attaining and sustaining status as an international student. The 'International Student Life Cycle' is a starting point to access programs of study, English language training, commission based recruiters, bringing dependents into and exchange visitors into the US. Additional reference guides include preparation steps to study in a student and exchange visitor program (SEVP-certified school), financial assessment, completion of forms 1 -20 "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status", 1 - 901, "Student and Exchange Visitor Information System" service fee (SEVIS), I-539 Transfer Student, I - 515A 30 - day entry waiver, employment and optional Science, Technical, Engineering and Math (STEM) practical training opportunities, obtaining a Social Security (SSN) number or Individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN).

*Students / Study in the States.* <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

12. **Washington State Achievement Council: Financial Aid Resources**

<https://wsac.wa.gov/immigrants>

Because there are different ways to qualify for college financial aid based on immigration status, this resource page from the Washington Student Achievement Council is useful for understanding and comparing the different state-specific eligibility categories. The WSAC online resources include surveys to help students identify their eligibility and materials and forms for applying for aid through the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA). Unlike the traditional FAFSA, students are eligible for WASFA support despite their immigration status, including students who have DACA or are undocumented. The WSAC page also links to scholarships specifically for immigrant or undocumented students. This site breaks down a complicated financial aid process into simple steps and forms and clearly indicates access points for students to finance their education regardless of immigration status.

*Students Who Are Immigrants, Are Undocumented, or Have DACA / WSAC.*

<https://wsac.wa.gov/immigrants>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

13. **Financial Aid Tip Sheet for Refugee & Asylee Students**

[http://www.nasfaa.org/unique\\_student\\_circumstances](http://www.nasfaa.org/unique_student_circumstances)

Since students who are refugees or asylees may face other barriers for applying for financial aid based on an evolving legal status, limited access to traditional educational or family financial documentation, this Tip Sheet from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators breaks down some very useful distinctions about eligibility based on students' status-designations. This resource from an expert source outlines special procedures for students who may be applying for FAFSA, Pell Grants,

other scholarships, and in-state tuition under circumstances where they cannot produce Expected Family Contribution calculations or are experiencing challenges producing proof of secondary education. This source itemizes specific issues and questions that refugee and asylee students frequently face when applying for assistance paying for their education without requiring them to interpret dense administrative policy.

*Student Aid Tips for Unique Student Populations | NASFAA.*

[http://www.nasfaa.org/unique\\_student\\_circumstances](http://www.nasfaa.org/unique_student_circumstances). Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.

## Citations

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  - 4a) *The 2020 Version of the Civics Test | USCIS.* 10 Dec. 2020, "Update: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals." *Department of Homeland Security*, 7 Dec. 2020, <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/2020test>.
  - 4b) "Update: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals." *Department of Homeland Security*, 7 Dec. 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/12/07/update-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals>.
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11. *Students | Study in the States.* <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students> Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.
12. *Students Who Are Immigrants, Are Undocumented, or Have DACA | WSAC.* <https://wsac.wa.gov/immigrants>. Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.  
*Student Aid Tips for Unique Student Populations | NASFAA* [http://www.nasfaa.org/unique\\_student\\_circumstances](http://www.nasfaa.org/unique_student_circumstances) Accessed 10 Dec. 2020.