

Dear Mayor Durkan and Councilmembers:

We thank Councilmember Mosqueda and the Seattle City Council for your leadership in unanimously passing JumpStart Seattle with a robust spending plan. The bold investments will help build resilience for residents of our city and lay the groundwork for an equitable recovery. **We call on Seattle City Council to override Mayor Durkan's veto of Jumpstart Seattle COVID-19 relief bill and urge the Mayor to appropriate needed money for emergency relief.**

As the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic is beginning to settle, there has been growing acknowledgment of the central role that immigrant workers play on the frontlines of the war against the virus. What is less recognized—but increasingly evident—is that immigrants are also disproportionately suffering from economic hardship caused by shutdowns and social distancing, are falling victim to the lethal virus, and becoming targets of hate and discrimination. **Many are excluded from the relief authorized by Congress and are not eligible for much of our state's safety net as well.**

**Millions of immigrants are working in frontline occupations, such as health care, food production and distribution, as well as transportation.** They are overrepresented in certain critical occupations, such as doctors and home health aides, where they face heightened risk of exposure. Another 6 million immigrants work in industries such as food services and domestic household services that have been economically devastated, making up 20 percent of the total workers in those industries.

**Beyond the economic hardship, immigrants in the United States also are facing more difficulty accessing health care if they contract the coronavirus.** Here in Washington, agricultural settings including apple, cherry, and other orchards, as well as meat-packing plants in Central Washington, have become centers of coronavirus outbreaks. Workers in these industries have had to strike to demand basic PPE protections, and many remain sheltered in group housing settings that do not offer enough social distancing to be truly safe.

A forthcoming Migration Policy Institute analysis shows that 7.7 million noncitizens lacked health insurance in 2018, making up 27 percent of the total U.S. uninsured population. Noncitizens are disproportionately uninsured both because of lack of coverage from their employers when they work in the informal sector, and ineligibility for public coverage because of their immigration status. And this substantial uninsured population will grow as immigrants continue to lose jobs where employers had paid for their insurance coverage.

**Congress has passed four bipartisan federal pandemic-relief packages. However, many immigrants have been systematically excluded, particularly the unauthorized and their U.S.-citizen and legal permanent resident relatives.** Many immigrants and refugees have been left out of CARES Act \$1200 stimulus payments, and unauthorized workers have been excluded from additional federal and state level unemployment supports.

Jumpstart Seattle makes a modest investment to support these communities, by investing \$18 million in 2020 on:

- \$17 million for direct financial assistance for immigrant and refugee households
- \$1 million for language access support for people who need help accessing and understanding assistance programs

**We call on Seattle City Council to override Mayor Durkan's veto of Jumpstart Seattle.** We also call on the Mayor to act swiftly to appropriate needed money to immediately support our immigrant and refugee neighbors who have been systematically left out of other relief packages.

Sincerely,

El Centro de la Raza

Casa Latina

OneAmerica

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project