



Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center

2019 Annual Report

Recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of all people, KIAC works for the wellbeing and empowerment of immigrants through education, advocacy and social justice.

Dear Friends of KIAC:

Preparing an annual report is a good moment to take stock of what we do as an organization. KIAC had much to be proud of in 2019: a dedicated team of volunteers and staff, an expanded network of community partnerships, committed supporters who provided financial stability, and strong board leadership and oversight.

As we write this report, KIAC, along with the rest of the nation, is in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and growing societal unrest. This has been a moment to not only take stock of WHAT we do, but also WHY we do it.



Celebrating Citizenship

We do it because, at KIAC, we recognize the worth and dignity of all people. We do it because we believe that the best measure of a society is how we treat our most vulnerable members.

2019 was a year of political turmoil and confusion for immigrant communities. As always, KIAC stepped up with flexible solutions to the constant deluge of policy changes calculated to discourage immigration, and with direct on-the-ground services and resources. COVID-19 has only made matters worse. Immigrants have been hit especially hard by job losses and are often ineligible for government assistance. Our staff and volunteers moved quickly to provide continuity of service for our clients: almost all Legal and Family Services are operational remotely, and we have added programming such as food and rent assistance.

This Annual Report reflects the passion and determination of many people who believe in the dignity and worth of immigrants-- the hundreds of volunteers who donated hours last year equivalent to 9 staff positions, the 6 staff members who work as hard as teams twice their size, the generous donors who undergird the work, the community partners who creatively problem-solve with us, and the Board who provides our foundation.

We do not know what the future holds. But we know our commitment to our clients and to the immigrant community has never been stronger.



Friendship, support and learning about America while preparing for Citizenship.

Sally Tellekson
Executive Director

Althea Paulson
President, Board of Directors

Rights | Resources | Representation

Context and Achievements

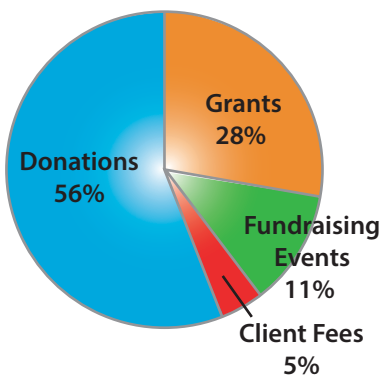
About Our Clients

- In 2019 our clients hailed from over 30 countries.
- Most - over 80% - were from Guatemala or Mexico.
- 80% of KIAC's Family Services Center's clients were living below the Federal poverty level
- Over 90% of Legal Program cases involved securing some level of legal status, such as citizenship, green cards, asylum or stay of deportation

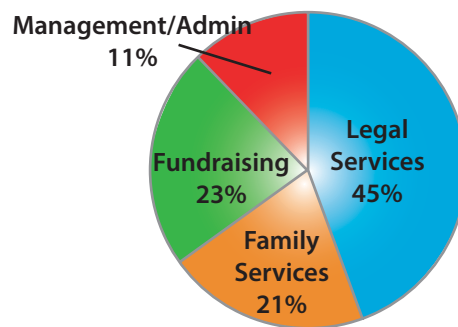
Tax and Business License Program

This KIAC program assisted 146 immigrants who were seeking to meet their civic and legal obligations to file Federal income tax returns and state business tax returns. KIAC helped them prepare their tax returns, apply for Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) and register their businesses with Washington State. Mentoring in record-keeping and financial literacy was also available.

2019 Income: \$451,136



2019 Expenses: \$363,568



KIAC Accredited Representative provides one-on-one in depth assistance.

Challenges of 2019

This past year was a rollercoaster of new challenges for the immigrant community in our area, both in terms of high-level policy changes and local dynamics. We saw the new public charge rule, Title X restrictions, and severe limits on asylum. Nearby ICE sweeps increased fear of accessing needed services and going about daily life. We saw housing prices in Kitsap spike, while incomes remained about the same, leading to many families opting to share tightened spaces in houses and apartments rather than allow their neighbors to become homeless. Immigrant youth continue to face the pressure of merging cultural expectations from their parents and country of origin together with the social expectations of middle and high school in America.

A's Story

A, from the Philippines, had lived in the US for 20 years and longed to become a citizen. She knew English, but her limited education made it very hard for her to grasp the concepts required for the citizenship test. And she could not afford the filing fee.

KIAC prepared her naturalization application and got a fee waiver. Our tutors and interpreters worked with her intensively, and another volunteer translated the Oath of Allegiance into colloquial Tagalog so that A could absorb its meaning. The whole team shared A's pride when she passed her interview and registered to vote.



Volunteer Training is provided to ensure high quality services for clients and a fulfilling experience for volunteers.

Connecting Community, Offering Services and Seeking Justice

Family Services Program

KIAC's Family Services Program seeks to draw on the resiliency learned from immigrant communities: mutual support makes us stronger. 2019 was a year of new and closer partnerships with agencies, faith communities, healthcare providers, educators and immigrant leaders. It was a year of gatherings – a summer potluck, a holiday "posada," a growing moms' group, and countless conversations with community partners. We deepened our bench of volunteers – including multiple trilingual teenagers! - and we are continually excited as we meet fellow community members who are eager to welcome and support our immigrant neighbors.

Last year we served more than 400 individuals, representing nearly 300 families. We are looking forward to new family and youth programming in 2020, continued advocacy for services in the West Sound to be accessible to those with limited English proficiency and varied documentation statuses, and expanded partnerships in healthcare and education.



Clothing Closet: Provided by
our sharing community!

2019 Family Service Highlights:

- 964 Visits to KIAC Drop-In Center
- 202 Visits to our medical and dental clinics
- 373 Visits to our monthly clothing events
- 70 Visits to "Grupo de Mamas" women's group
- New class in Spanish for people living with diabetes
- One-on-one English conversation tutoring

Legal Services Program

In 2019 KIAC Legal Services worked against the backdrop of a dramatic rise in the administration's efforts to increase deportation, restrict immigration and raise the difficulty for achieving status. We focused on providing a wide range of immigration legal services in Kitsap, Clallam, Jefferson and north Mason Counties. We served 204 new clients while continuing to handle the caseload from prior years. Each client brought unique, often heart rending, circumstances in their search for a better life in the US. Our all-volunteer legal representatives (11 accredited with 5 more in training) provided these services despite the ever changing, restrictive national immigration policy.

We continued our robust collaborations with the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP), One America, Jefferson County Immigrant Rights Advocates (JCIRA), and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC).

2019 Legal Service Highlights

- 295 open cases at years end
- 93% of our 31 court hearings were successful
- 21 Clients became new citizens
- 51 Citizenship applications filed; total of 92 pending

"The legal people at KIAC saved my life. They took my case when no one else would. They fought for me to get asylum and I did. Now I can live my life without the fear that I will be attacked and assaulted again". -- S, age 16



KIAC secured this client's release from
Tacoma detention center.

KIAC's Programs in 2019

Immigration Legal Services

Affordable advice and representation for:

- Naturalization / Citizenship
- DACA or Green Card Renewal
- Adjustment of Status
- Family Petitions
- U-Visa and VAWA
- Removal defense / asylum



We celebrate our immigrants and their contributions to the fabric of our community

Financial Services

- Federal and State Tax Preparation
- ITIN applications
- WA State Business License applications
- Small business record-keeping coaching

Tutoring

- Preparation for the US Citizenship Test
- English conversation practice

Family Services Drop-in Center

- Filling out forms and making phone calls
- Bills, financial assistance, payment plans
- Finding healthcare options
- Finding legal counsel for divorce, custody, domestic violence
- Referrals for child and adult education
- Finding housing and employment
- Information about community resources

Health and Support Services

- Medical and Dental Clinics
- Grupo de Mamas
- Living with Diabetes

Community Education and Sharing

- Know Your Rights presentations
- Film showings and discussions
- Presentations for community groups
- Clothing Closet



KIAC Float in BI Grand Old
4th of July Parade

KIAC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We are funded primarily by community donations.
To find out more and support us, visit: www.kitsapiac.org

Thank you to our donors!