

A Proposal to Week of Compassion for Fulfilling God’s Call to Welcome, Support and Advocate for Immigrant Communities, from Disciples Obra Hispana, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries, and the Christian Church Capital Area Region

Proposal Summary:

This grant proposal requests urgent financial support to increase the capacity within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to address the emergent immigration crisis and the overwhelming needs produced by this humanitarian crisis which if not addressed, will continue to negatively impact generations to come. We propose to increase this capacity by increasing the staff working on the ground through an Immigration Crisis Response Specialist. This initiative proposes an intensive, intentional direct action with congregations and immigrant led community partners and will be addressed over an initial nineteen-month period, at which time additional funding should be secured to continue the effort as needed. The proposed program aims to increase awareness, equip congregations and individuals, and increase outreach to immigrants, creating long-term change for addressing critical and emergent needs for refugee/immigrant families and individuals.

Background:

During the 2017 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indianapolis, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries (Obra Hispana), Immigration Legal Counsel, North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD), the National Benevolent Association, Disciples Women, with some key border congregations, joined to present GA-1723, a “Sense of the Assembly” resolution titled “On Becoming Immigrant Welcoming Communities”. The Resolution was passed unanimously by delegates and may be found at: <http://ga.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/GA-1723-On-Becoming-Immigrant-Welcoming-Congregations.pdf>.

GA-1723 recognized our biblical calling—repeated frequently throughout our sacred texts-- to welcome the stranger, for “just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40 NRSV). It recalled our CC(DOC) heritage as a movement founded in part by immigrant ministers such as Thomas and Alexander Campbell. It recognized the growth in numbers and contributions of immigrants in our communities throughout the U.S. and Canada, and the prevalence of Disciples immigrant members and congregations from Hispanic/LatinX, Haitian, Liberian, Korean, and many other backgrounds. The resolution also especially highlighted the extreme fears and growing anxieties faced by immigrants and their often mixed-status families in our congregations and communities, due to experienced trauma, increasing family separations, and immigration policies in need of reform.

Through the collaborative work of Obra Hispana (CPOHM), Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel, regions, general unit and ecumenical partners, we continue to see the fears, anxieties and trauma that precipitated GA-1723 continue to multiply within our Disciples congregations and in communities across the country. This calls us to go deeper to work with, for and within these affected communities, to strengthen congregation awareness and commitment, and to increase our potential as the Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ) to “do justice, love mercy and walk humbly before our God” (Micah 6:8). We must learn to build relationships of partnership and solidarity with immigrants and refugees in our congregations and communities to increase our capacity to support and accompany families experiencing separation and trauma due to detention or deportation.

Context of Need:

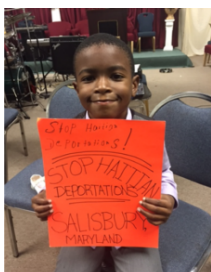
Since 2017, pressures upon immigrants have mounted due to many changes in immigration policies and practices. A few examples of these changes include:

- **Implementation of “Zero Tolerance,”** leading to reduced use of prosecutorial discretion; even for long term community members and faith leaders such as our own Rev. Hebert Mallqui (at rt.) in Georgia, with multiple US born children and a child with serious health conditions; (See:

<https://www.univision.com/univision-news/immigration/peruvian-pastor-faces-deportation-despite-three-u-s-born-children-one-with-serious-medical-needs/>.)



- **Termination of Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) Status** for 4,000 Liberians, affecting congregations such as our Whosoever Will Christian Church in Beltsville, Md. (See: <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/liberian-deferred-enforced-departure-ded-resources/>). A court case, and proposed legislation, have just been filed in hopes to protect DED recipients.



- **Terminations of Temporary Protected Status** for over 310,500 Sudanese, Nicaraguans, Haitians, El Salvadorans, Nepalese, and Hondurans, impacting multiple Disciples congregations and leaders from these backgrounds, such as our Haitian congregations in Maryland and New York. (See: <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/immigrants/temporary-protected-status-tps/>). Multiple court cases are pending regarding TPS populations.

- **Increasing Deportation Threats Faced by Previous Refugees**, especially Southeast Asians, leaving 16,000 families with deportation orders facing new traumas as they learn to cope. (See: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/deportations-southeast-asian-americans-stress-families-finances-advocates-say-n914461>).
- **Ending of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program for “Dreamers,”** resulting in impending loss of status and work authorization for more than 800,000 young adults (many of them in our congregations) who were studying and working under the DACA program. At this time, their status remains in limbo as the decision to end DACA winds its way through the courts, and as a new Dream Act was recently introduced to Congress. (See: <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/refugee-immigration-ministries/immigrants/dreamersdream-actdaca/>).
- **Asylum Restrictions**, such as recent endeavors to return asylum seekers to Mexico while their cases are processing and deeming persons who cross between ports of entry ineligible to apply for asylum; leaving individuals and families seeking protections and with connections to many of our congregations unable to pursue safety.

- **Efforts to Limit to Family Immigration and End the Diversity VISA**, including repeated proposals to Congress to cut legal immigration in half and to eliminate the Diversity Visa which currently allows 50,000 persons annually from some of the poorest nations and countries with low immigration rates (especially Africans) an opportunity to apply through a lottery for permanent residency.

Program Goals and Outcomes:

Goal 1- Increase awareness that prepares our congregations to build the spiritual practices, healing, knowledge, and partnerships necessary to grow the “Immigrant Welcoming Congregations,” and strengthen our collective voice and commitment to those in need

Outcome 1.1- A minimum of 30 congregations will engage in intensive, intentional theological reflection and training to strengthen the understanding of our call in the Biblical texts to care for those impacted by the immigration crisis.

Outcome 1.2- Participants will demonstrate an increase in knowledge of immigration issues and will demonstrate the ability to communicate this to others enabling an increase in connection to resources, and to opportunities to serve those in need.

Outcome 1.3- A replicable foundation for continued congregational and individual development for working with, for and within immigrant communities will be established, providing a framework for years to come that transforms our internal and external culture for this holy work.

Goal 2- Equip individuals and congregations to actively engage in the advocacy, and hands on mission work to break the chains that continue to bind these immigrant communities to fear, anxiety, family separation and injustice which are creating a negative impact on the quality of life for generations to come.

Outcome 2.1- Cultivate environments and networks of congregations and individuals that foster reconciliation, restoration and justice in the refugee and immigrant community within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and across the life of the immigrant communities.

Outcome 2.2- An increase will be experienced in the number of individuals working alongside immigrant led community organizations in the local community, building relationships of trust that fosters support and accompaniment of impacted immigrant families.

Outcome 2.3- A minimum of 20 congregations will become “Immigrant Welcoming Communities,” establishing a plan and creating the appropriate operational and systemic changes to faithfully and effectively engage with the immigrant community, especially those experiencing trauma, separation and fear from detention or deportation.

Outcome 2.4- An increase will be demonstrated in the number of congregations and individuals participating in advocacy for refugee and immigrant communities and immigration reform through participation with RIM and other partners at the local, state and national level.

Goal 3- **Expand the outreach** to affected refugee and immigrant families and individuals experiencing separation due to detention or deportation.

Outcome 3.1- Congregations will be equipped to provide financial, spiritual and emotional support to separated immigrant families.

Outcome 3.2- The Immigration Crisis Response Specialist will connect impacted families with Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel for evaluation as appropriate, and will work to connect to community resources, in addition to providing financial support for immediate emergency needs when deemed appropriate and necessary

Outcome 3.3- The number of unsupported families experiencing separation and anxiety will decrease as the number of individuals from congregations are building relationship with immigrant communities and are actively engaging in hands on support and accompaniment.

Outcome 3.4- An increase in the number of immigrant children impacted by family separation receiving appropriate emotional, mental and physical care will be demonstrated through increased outreach efforts connecting them to professional services, and building relationships of trust and accompaniment.

Outcome 3.5- As individuals are trained in the local congregation to work with and for immigrant families, an increase will be demonstrated in the number of families experiencing separation receiving pastoral care and faith-based support.

Recognizing the need for both pastoral care and prophetic and merciful responses to immigrant families which are already in, and which may be seeking welcome into our communities, this Immigration Crisis Response program will seek to transform the lives of individuals and congregations and impact faith in continuity with our commitments as expressed in GA-1723. We will do so by recruiting, resourcing, and connecting congregations to engage in three primary components beneficial to building immigrant supporting communities. Congregations will be encouraged to engage in one or more aspects of each key area of immigrant welcoming and support:

1. Prayer and Faithful Preparation

- In this phase, congregations will be encouraged to engage in a faith journey that selects from suggested resources based upon refugee and immigrant concerns of interest to their area and congregation.
- Preparation will also include learning about immigration or refugee issues that are of interest and impact in their areas; learning, for example, about dreamer stories, local TPS recipients, family separations, mixed-status families, impacts of detentions and deportations upon families, or other concerns.

2. Partnerships and Protections

- In this phase, congregations will be equipped and encouraged to build direct relationships with immigrants in their community, to invite and hear in person the stories of individuals and the impact of immigration on their families and congregations, and may engage in meals and social events that promote mutual sharing, cultural, and personal understanding.
- Congregations will also learn about needs for protections, networks providing solidarity and/or sanctuary or accompaniment support for ICE or other check in visits, and will become familiar with immigrant personal support needs, such as detention visitation networks and mental health assistance and resources.

3. Prevention and Policy Support

- Congregations in this area will learn how to raise their public voices of faith as immigrants and in solidarity with immigrants; through vigils, press conferences, legislative visits, etc.
- Congregational members will plan and engage in local and/or state and national events that promote solutions to issues and anxieties faced by immigrants in your area. The Immigration Crisis Response Outreach Specialist, along with members of partnering agencies, will offer guidance and partnership in developing such actions.

The exact “path” of engagement will be different for each congregation. Congregations will be invited to select their own actions in partnership with program leaders and according to the unique dynamics within their own communities. Congregations will be urged to engage in ongoing activities for a minimum of one year, sufficient time to change culture and practice as lives are transformed. Representatives from each participating congregation will be encouraged to join periodic phone/video resource and relationship building check-ins with other active congregations, to share successful strategies and strengthen their work.

Timeline for Program Rollout:

To meet this timeline, we request program funding in May, enabling the hiring of a full-time Immigration Crisis Response Specialist by mid-June. The CPOHM will serve as the fiscal and program management for funding, while direct supervision of the Immigration Crisis Response Specialist will be the Director of Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries. Collaborative partners and program staff will connect regularly to monitor the development of the program, and to identify additional resources, modify and make improvements needed.

The Immigration Crisis Response Specialist will enable intensive outreach to congregations to increase the number of actively engaged in accompanying and supporting families and individuals negatively impacted by the immigration crisis. This will allow for the continued and expanding advocacy, resource development, and congregational engagement work led by Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea, RIM Director. This critical work must continue, but we recognize an overwhelming need to work alongside and to equip congregations and this cannot be done without an increase in staff.

We will launch congregational training, demonstrate our collaborative partnership, and introduce program staffing at this summer’s General Assembly in July of 2019, by holding a two-session workshop on “Becoming Immigrant Welcoming Congregations” and providing other immigration relevant material to unveil the program, provide the context, and share initial examples of partnerships and ways of supporting immigrant communities and getting involved.

Proposed Program Budget: (19 months- June 2019 through December 2020)

Personnel-	\$101,627.00
1 FTE Bilingual Immigration Crisis Response Specialist (19 months) \$42,500 annual salary doe, extended to 19 months	\$ 67,292.00
Pension (14%)	\$ 9,420.00
Health Insurance Stipend \$1,000 mo x 19 mo	\$ 19,000.00
Payroll Taxes & ERE	\$ 5,915.00
Program Development-	\$ 4,000.00
Core Program Planning Retreat- location TBD (1 RIM Dir., 1 ICRS, 1 pastor, 1 lay leader, 2 RM, 1 Obra NP, 1 NAPAD EP) \$500 pp x 8p (includes travel, meals and lodging)	\$ 4,000.00
Program Travel & Congregational Training-	\$ 24,000.00
Airfare/Car Rental, Lodging, Meals, Event Registration (ICRS) \$1,000 mo x 19 mo	\$ 19,000.00
Other travel, RIM Director, partner support and travel for persons to attend training, special advocacy events, and other support	\$ 10,000.00
Resource Development and Printing-	\$ 3,000.00
Printing of toolkit, accompaniment resources, support materials in multiple languages; banner and promotional material for GA 19, signs	\$ 3,000.00
Supplies and Materials-	\$ 2,100.00
Office and program supplies as needed for training and day to day op \$300 x qtr x 7 qtrs= 2,100.00	
Total Requested Budget	\$139,727.00