

CCSWW provides services for DREAMers through DACA

Catholic Community Services of Western Washington (CCSWW) has begun its response to DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), the recent immigration policy granting limited protection to qualifying undocumented immigrants.

CCSWW has increased the number of legal staff and office hours for its Catholic Immigration Legal Services (CILS) program in both Seattle and Mt. Vernon, and has provided start-up grants to St. James Cathedral's English as a Second Language (ESL) program in Seattle and to St. Louise De Marillac Catholic Church in Bellevue.

On June 15, 2012, President Obama announced limited protection for individuals who came to the United States as children. Sometimes called DREAMers after the proposed DREAM Act, these young adults, if they meet several key guidelines, may request consideration of deferred action for two years, (subject to renewal) and are eligible for work authorization. The Administration also announced that it will stop deporting DREAM Act-eligible youth.

In Seattle and Mt. Vernon, CILS legal staff is taking limited DACA cases at a nominal fee for qualifying low-income individuals. Catholic Immigration Legal Services has provided immigration legal services for over 35 years, and it is a BIA (Board of Immigration Appeals) recognized program that assists low-income immigrants with high quality legal representation. Their legal staff is comprised of one Directing Immigration Attorney and three BIA Accredited Representatives certified to provide immigration legal assistance

The St. James Cathedral's ESL program will use CCSWW grant money to support a pilot project to help DREAMers apply for deferred action. St. James has provided naturalization assistance to immigrants for over 13 years. The ESL program is recognized by the BIA and has three staff members with partial BIA accreditation certified to provide immigration legal assistance.

St. Louise De Marillac Catholic Church, in Bellevue, will use the CCSWW grant money to support the needs and concerns of its large Latino membership in response to DACA. On August 25 and 26, St. Louise held an informational clinic for potential DACA-eligible immigrants. About 200 people attended over a two-day period and they are still receiving calls inquiring about DACA. They are in the process determining the plan of how to meet the needs of the Latino community for DACA, and will have another clinic with immigration attorneys.

If you would like to contact CILS, please complete an immigration phone intake by calling (206) 328-6314 or (206) 328-5714 for Seattle, or (360) 416-7095, ext. 226. for Mt. Vernon. For more information, visit our website at www.ccsww.org/CILS. If you would like to contact St. James Cathedral's English as a Second Language (ESL) program, call (206) 382-4511.