NEIGHBORS IN NEED
A COVID-19 Emergency Fund
When the coronavirus pandemic hit, LIRS knew we had to take action for the immigrant and refugee community. Our New American family was hit hard by COVID-19 and its effects; many lost their jobs in the service, hospitality, and production industries, while many more risked their lives on the front lines of healthcare and food production. Many of our immigrant brothers and sisters were excluded from government stimulus packages, while others were hesitant to get medical care for fear of retribution.

We established Neighbors in Need as an emergency fund to serve these critical needs. In just four months, we were able to provide emergency financial assistance to 361 at-risk families who have suffered illness, job loss, or other hardship due to the crisis.
OVERVIEW

$342,000 disbursed to immigrants and refugees

361 families served

Types of Migrants

- Refugee
- Special Immigrant Visa Holder
- Unaccompanied Child
- Other
- Asylum Seeker
- Asylee
OVERVIEW

Expense Types

Neighbors in Need distributed supportive funds to families and individuals in light of the following:

- Loss of Income 63%
- Emergency Housing Expenses 53%
- Emergency Medical Services and Related Costs 4%
- Emergency Child and/or Elder Care 2%
- Loss of Access to Social Services 2%
- Emergency Travel 1%
- Other 3%
Through Neighbors in Need, funds were provided for immigrants and refugees in the following categories:

- People with disabilities
- People with mental/emotional health issues
- People with physical health issues
- LGBTQ+ communities
- Single parent households
- Uninsured/under-insured homeowners or tenants
- Homeless/underhoused people (prior to disaster)
- English language learners
- People living below federal poverty line
- Unemployed/underemployed people

Neighbors in Need allocated grants ranging in amount based on highest need, with over 75% of people receiving $500 to $1,500 in support.
This single mother of four lost her job as a dishwasher in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She was extremely troubled about her unemployment status and feared they would have to leave their home. The children shared their mother’s anxiety, intensified by uncertainty surrounding their father’s detention in immigration custody.

Fortunately, the family gained approval from Neighbors in Need and were allotted funds to ensure they could meet rent. The children also received electronic tablets to learn English and advance their other studies virtually. The mother has since been able to return to work and to achieve some financial stability. She and her family remain grateful that Neighbors in Need was able to provide financial resources during such difficult times.
Ms. Nuong Thi My Kien and her three children arrived in the US in 2016 from Vietnam and registered as secondary migrants with The Center, formerly the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (MVRCR). Since 1979, The Center has assisted individuals from 35 countries with resettlement in Utica, New York. Today, The Center continues to assist refugees, immigrants, and those with limited English language proficiency throughout the integration process, helping them to establish independence and to build community in their new geographical homes.

Nuong’s eldest son went to visit Vietnam at the beginning of 2020 but could not return due to the pandemic. As a result, the family lost its entire income, for he was the sole financial provider for the family of four. They were unable to pay their rent and did not have money to buy groceries. Thanks to Neighbors in Need, LIRS was able to extend Ms. Nuong’s family a grant to cover these expenses. The family avoided late fees and possible eviction.
A young family of five living in Minnesota found themselves unable to afford rent after the father was laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The family had lived in the US for about eight months and were just starting to establish themselves. Despite several efforts to apply for unemployment insurance and grants, the family was unable to secure any other sources of income. Their savings had dwindled to less than $200 when they received news that the Neighbors in Need fund would pay for their next month of expenses. They were so grateful and relieved to learn that they would not have to choose between paying their bills and feeding their family. Their story only further highlights the unique vulnerabilities that many refugees and immigrants face in this pandemic, particularly in light of limited and lacking federal aid, and underscores the essential role LIRS’ Neighbors in Need fund plays in filling the gaps during this unprecedented moment in American history.

Neighbors in Need proved to be an immense help, providing about $1,000 to pay for monthly housing and living expenses. The mother now has food on the table for her sons, enough money to begin a payment plan with her landlord that should keep her in her home when Maryland’s eviction freeze is lifted, and a few dollars for emergencies.

Learn more at lirs.org!
LIRS would like to extend our sincerest thanks to the funders that helped make *Neighbors in Need* possible: Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP), Latter-day Saint Charities, Friends of Refugees, and Refugee Council USA (RCUSA).

Thank you for your support!