



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager
FROM: Council Member Olgy Diaz and Senior Council Policy Analyst Lynda Foster
COPY: City Clerk and City Council
SUBJECT: **Resolution – Contingency Fund Request to Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest for their Phone Call Fund and to support their Welcome Center services – September 9, 2025**
DATE: August 27, 2025

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution authorizing an expenditure of \$20,000 from the Council Contingency Fund to Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest (AIDNW) for their Phone Call Fund and to support their Welcome Center services.

[CM Olgy Diaz]

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Council Members Joe Bushnell, Olgy Diaz, and Kristina Walker.

BACKGROUND:

This Sponsors' Recommendation is Based On:

Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest (AIDNW) is a non-profit organization that serves immigrants detained in the Pacific Northwest through assistance, advocacy, and increased awareness. Through hands-on immigrant assistance programs, AIDNW's small staff and over 200 volunteers address the needs of detained persons held inside the Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC), and upon release. The need for support of detainees within the NWIPC is rapidly increasing. According to Congresswoman Randall¹, the NWIPC number of detainees has increased significantly, from about 700 last November to 1,300 in April and 1,562 as of August 1. The facility's capacity is 1,575. Detainees are having to stay longer in the NWIPC, with certain detainees no longer eligible for a bond hearing as they fight deportation proceedings in court².

AIDNW Phone Call Fund

This request includes \$8,000 to AIDNW for their Phone Call Fund to support access to phone services for detainees in the NWIPC. The NWIPC requires detainees to utilize a private, for-profit phone service to place phone calls. AIDNW receives \$2,700 a month from a private donor for this program, but due to the increased population in the facility these funds are exhausted by the fifth day of the month. These allocated funds would be used by AIDNW to distribute phone money to low-income detainees in \$20 per month increments. Funds received can be used by detainees to call friends, family, and legal advocates.

Communication with the outside world is crucial for incarcerated people. This includes individuals facing deportation while detained in immigration detention centers, who do not have the right to court-appointed counsel. Having the ability to make a phone call in a detention center is essential for a variety of reasons. Individuals need to secure legal representation or advice, gather evidence to support their defenses against deportation, and receive needed emotional support from family and friends. Detained immigrants with legal representation are 10 times more likely to win their immigration cases compared to those who lack counsel and are seven times more likely to be released from custody than those without counsel³. In some cases, detainees can contact Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) for free, but not all detainees have NWIRP lawyers. Low-

¹ <https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/rep-emily-randall-ice-tacoma/281-df4d1df5-9c73-48d4-8e29-14560d220e8e>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2025/07/14/ice-trump-undocumented-immigrants-bond-hearings/>

³ <https://www.aclu.org/news/immigrants-rights/without-access-to-counsel-detained-immigrants-face-increased-risks-of-prolonged-detention-and-unlawful-deportation>



income individuals detained in the NWIPC risk being unable to afford to pay for phone access and face reduced access to legal support and poor mental and emotional health impacts from isolation.

Welcome Center services

This request includes \$12,000 to AIDNW to support running their Welcome Center. Individuals released from the NWIPC are not offered resources to communicate with friends or family to pick them up, arrange transportation, or find housing. The NWIPC is in an isolated location without resources. This Welcome Center is located immediately outside the NWIPC and is staffed primarily with volunteers who warmly greet released immigrants and asylum seekers. At the Welcome Center, volunteers offer food, charge electronics like phones, and assist individuals in arranging where to go. In 2025, 59% of individuals released from the NWIPC were not from our region. Without the Welcome Center there to help connect these individuals to their friends and family, and to provide rides to places like the airport or train station, these individuals could end up isolated and homeless in the Tideflats. AIDNW will also assist local individuals in reuniting with friends and family, connecting to host homes if eligible, or transporting individuals to shelters. AIDNW has also served as the approved party to receive individuals who qualify for the Franco Qualified Representative Program (FQRP), a nationwide program to provide necessary services to detained individuals who have been found mentally incompetent to represent themselves. The compassionate support that AIDNW volunteers and staff offer to immigrants in detention, and at their release, relieves isolation and anxiety, connects them to community resources, and provides hope for new lives.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

In 2024, the City Council approved \$10,000 in contingency funds to support the AIDNW Phone Call fund in alignment with requests from the Commission for Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (CIRA) and community advocates. In 2025, community calls to support individuals in the NWIPC have increased. This proposal addresses the most pressing needs AIDNW identified.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility: (Mandatory)

Approximately 7% of the US population, or 22.8 million people, are non-citizens. In 2017, nearly 260,000 people sought asylum, or protection from persecution, within the United States. These immigrant populations experience unique risks to health, including pre-migratory trauma, unsafe and stressful migration experiences, and post-migration discrimination. Human rights abuses can occur across this spectrum of the immigrant experience. Once in the United States, immigrants may experience fears of deportation or mistrust of health services, dissuading care-seeking behavior. Health outcomes associated with increased immigration enforcement and fear of deportation include increased cardiovascular risk factors, lower birth weights, and worsened mental health. In addition, these health behaviors and outcomes ripple throughout the communities to which immigrants belong. Twenty million children living in the United States have at least one immigrant parent, and more than 16.7 million people have at least one undocumented family member living with them, among whom nearly 50% are US born or naturalized citizens⁴. This already vulnerable population faces additional challenges if individuals find themselves in immigrant detention. According to the World Health Organization, immigration detention is harmful to health⁵.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score: Moderate Opportunity*

Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7348446/>

⁵ <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/04-05-2022-immigration-detention-is-harmful-to-health---alternatives-to-detention-should-be-used>



Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Improve access and proximity by residents to diverse income levels and race/ethnicity to community facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment.

Improve health outcomes and reduce disparities, in alignment with the community health needs assessment and CHIP, for all Tacoma residents

Decrease the percentage of individuals who are spending more than 45% of income on housing and transportation costs.

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

Expanding phone access to the vulnerable population detained at the NWIPC will assist detainees in seeking and receiving legal counsel, and will also provide resources for detained individuals to maintain connections to individuals outside of the detention facility. Being able to connect with friends and family will allow detainees to coordinate logistics for their time in detention and release, as well as maintain critical connections that is essential for mental health. The Welcoming Center directly prevents individuals released from the NWIPC from homelessness and harm. Without people on site to welcome individuals and transport them to services, these individuals would be without resources in an incredibly isolated part of the City.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Refer AIDNW to the standard funding cycles offered by the City.	Reviews this funding request against other applications.	The spike in detainees and increased need for support in 2025 was an unexpected development requiring urgent response.
2. Fund at a higher level	Addresses more than \$20,000 in need,	Reduces funding for other Council priorities.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

AIDNW shall be provided information on how to apply to standard funding opportunities at the City of Tacoma.

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

The sponsors recommend approving this contingency fund request to provide \$20,000 to Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest (AIDNW) for their Phone Call Fund to support access to phone services for detainees in the Northwest ICE Processing Center and to support running their Welcoming Center to connect individuals exiting the NWIPC to critical resources.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1.1030- Council Contingency Fund	660000	5412010	\$20,000
2.			
TOTAL			\$20,000



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What Funding is being used to support the expense?

Council Contingency funds.

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN BELOW

The Council Contingency Fund provides an established amount of funding each year for unbudgeted Council sponsored initiatives.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

No

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

No

Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts?

No

ATTACHMENTS:

List attachments using bullet points.

- Resolution