

## **CSJ Ministry Responses to COVID-19**

Ministry: Justice Office/Justice Commission

Submitted by: Marty Roers

1. Is your ministry responding directly to those affected by COVID-19? How?

**Justice Office** and the **CSJ Justice Commission** has been extremely active this past month in advocating for justice on behalf of the most vulnerable and those deeply impacted by COVID-19 for example:

**The Legislative Advocacy Partners (LAP) Working Group** organized advocacy efforts to contact state legislators and the MN Congressional delegation to urge them to include critical services and emergency funding for ALL our most vulnerable Minnesotans, including our *undocumented dear neighbors* as a part of the State's COVID-19 emergency response package. This state funding is directed at keep our entire community safe throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, **LAP** also organized advocacy efforts specifically with MN legislators to urge them to include critical services and emergency funding *for people experiencing homelessness* as a part of the State's COVID-19 emergency response package. This funding was included in the Minnesota state emergency funding request that helped keep our emergency shelter system statewide from being overwhelmed by the added pressure of COVID-19.

**The Criminal Justice Working Group** together with **Confronting Whiteness and Racism Working Group** partnered with **the Justice Commission** to reaching out to Governor Walz and Commissioner Schnell to support efforts to discharge *nonviolent inmates and primary caregivers in detention* in order to reduce Minnesota's prison population and save lives now during this COVID-19 crisis.

The **Immigration Working Group** has also been advocating with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) – a group within the Department of Health & Human Services – which are holding some 3,600 *unaccompanied immigrant children* in largely for-profit shelters. [CBSNews confirmed on March 26th that 3 children at an Immigrant ORR shelter in NY have been confirmed COVID-19 positive.](#) The Immigration Working Group advocated for the release of these kids from detention in order to save lives during the COVID-19 crisis.

In addition, our ministry has also been responding in evolving ways to those most impacted by COVID-19 including:

Our **student interns with Celeste Dream and the Justice Office** have shifted their work to focus almost exclusively on supporting, maintaining, and increasing the outreach of the **St. Kate's Food Shelf** at this time. These student interns have been very instrumental in keeping the Food Shelf open, functioning, and well stocked with supplies while also

expanding outreach to *St. Mary's Health Clinics' clients and expanding outreach to students in need.*

Furthermore, the **Justice Office** has been supporting grassroots community efforts to sew and make cloth face masks & guards for *Health Care Professionals in rural clinics*. The Justice Office has also supported and made in-kind donations to local organizations doing direct serve to *people experiencing homelessness* at this time.

2. Have you altered your mission and/or operations in any way as a result of COVID-19? How?  
Like many during this time, we have needed to adjust not only how we work remotely through video conferencing, but we have also needed to redirect our advocacy efforts and over all justice focused efforts to address the injustices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the Minnesota State Legislature has been in an extended recess, and the Justice Commission has needed to pivot how we advocate and reach out to our elected officials at this time.

3. Has COVID-19 affected your financial condition? How? Explain how revenue has declined and/or expenses increased over a "normal" year.  
As the finances of the entire province changes and is impacted, the finances and donations to the work of the Justice Office will be impacted as well. For example, we most likely will NOT be hosting our retreat this year for local Organizations working with survivors of Human Trafficking in part to the increased difficulty in getting donations to off-set the costs of the retreat.

4. How much, specifically, do you need in emergency funding, and what would you use it for?  
Click or tap here to enter text.

5. How has COVID-19 affected your staffing?  
Click or tap here to enter text.

6. Have you determined how your ministry will return to "normal" when that time comes?  
Over all from the Justice Office perspective, it is probably not the most helpful to at this time to focus on returning to "normal." I personally believe that the impact on the most vulnerable members of society will be far reaching and will return to a "new normal." People's lives and livelihoods have been turned upside down, and the impacts on many vulnerable communities (people experiencing homelessness, the undocumented, immigrants, refugees, the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated, low income students, people living in poverty, etc.) will be something we will need to be much more attentive too and sensitive too in the coming week, month, and year(s).

7. What lingering effects do you expect to see in the populations you serve once the crisis itself is greatly reduced or over?  
Click or tap here to enter text.

8. Add any additional information you think our donors need to know:  
Click or tap here to enter text.

Thank you for your help on this. Please attach this form to your return email to [rscorpio@csministriesfoundation.org](mailto:rscorpio@csministriesfoundation.org) by next Wednesday, April 8.