

According to the last U.S. Census, the Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland metropolitan area hosts 56,066 foreign-born people (5.2% of total population). Approximately 52% of them settled in the years between 1990 and 2000.

The State of Michigan, which has seen a 57% increase in foreign-born population in that same period, has staved off declining population by welcoming the immigrant.



## Who are our Neighbors?

- A young couple fleeing the violence of political upheaval
- An abused woman whose U.S.-Citizen husband threatens her with deportation and separation from her children because of her immigration status.
- A father seeking to bring his wife and children out of a drought-stricken country.
- An unaccompanied immigrant child who has “aged-out” of the system before receiving a decision on her case
- A disillusioned man whose hard-earned money has gone to pay for worthless legal advice from people ready to take advantage of immigrants
- People who have been trafficked into the United States to work in slave-like environments

### JFON Regional Attorney

Susan E. Reed

### Regional Sites

#### Grand Rapids

Coordinator – Laura Rampersad

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#### Holland

Coordinators – Mary DeRidder & Sally Garrett

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Holland, Michigan 49423  
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# JFON

Justice for Our Neighbors  
West Michigan

## Free Immigration Legal Services

A Joint Project of:

First United Methodist Church of Grand Rapids,  
First United Methodist Church of Holland,  
West Michigan Conference, and  
United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

## WHAT WE DO:

- Family Petitions
- Adjustment of Status
- Naturalization
- Asylum Applications
- Representation in Immigration Court
- Religious Worker Visas
- Self-Petition under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
- T Visas for Victims of Trafficking
- Temporary Protective Status
- NACARA
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status
- Advice and Counsel

## JFON MISSION STATEMENT

Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON) is a faith-driven ministry, welcoming immigrants into our churches and communities by providing free, high-quality immigration legal services, education and advocacy.

# Free Immigration Legal Services, Education and Advocacy

The Justice for Our Neighbor Ministry (JFON) program initiated by the General Board of Global Ministries in 1999 has served thousands of immigrants throughout the United States. The United Methodist Community on Relief (UMCOR) sponsors the program with 20 clinic sites operating nationwide.

JFON was created as a response to the increasingly complex immigration regulations stemming from the Immigration Reform and Immigration Act of 1996. September 11<sup>th</sup> and the Patriot Act has exacerbated the situation, causing backlogs on new and existing applications and an increase in deportation orders.

### SUPPORT THE IMMIGRANT

The history of immigration to the United States of America is, according to the claims of some,

the history of the United States itself. As in many myths, the immigrant story has been exaggerated. Immigrants, including new colonists from before the establishment of the United States as a separate country, were never more than 15% of the population and usually considerably less.

Like never before, the plight of the immigrant is in the political spotlight. While our legislators continue to debate immigration policy and consider harsh penalties, 11 to 12 million immigrants amongst us live in fear of what tomorrow may bring.

The United Methodist Council of Bishops has issued many statements denouncing the treatment of the immigrant and urging congregations to lift up their voice in advocacy and provide ministry outreach.

## SERVICES PROVIDED REGARDLES OF RACE OR RELIGION



The UMC Bishops felt compelled to participate in political demonstrations and marches on the capitol.

### EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

The JFON network effectively provides outreach to the community as well as a strong forum for advocacy. JFON-West Michigan has responded to many requests from local congregations and community organizations to speak to their members and educate them on

current political debates and pending legislation.

### JFON RESPONSE

Our clients are served by a professional immigration attorney who remains with their case until relief is granted or all avenues are exhausted. Since opening our doors in 2004, we have served over 400 clients from 54 nations.

JFON-West Michigan is also preparing to respond to the tremendous need for legal services that will occur if Congress passes immigration reform that includes a guest worker visa.

The volunteers who work in the clinics hear the real life stories and see the moral issues of immigration in a much clearer light.



## HOW CAN I HELP?

- Support JFON – West Michigan with a financial or in-kind gift
- Invite us to give a presentation at your religious or civic organization
- Reach out to a neighbor in need - share this resource
- Encourage your employer or group to make a "matching gift"
- Study immigration issues and be an advocate for justice
- Volunteer your time at a clinic as:
  - Intake worker**
  - Translator**
  - Lawyer / Paralegal**
  - Hospitality worker**
  - Fundraiser**

CALL (616) 301-7461 FOR MORE INFORMATION