THE NORTHWEST IMMIGRANT RIGHTS PROJECT'S DEFENDER REFERRAL AND REPRESENTATION UNIT

GUIDE FOR KING COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDERS AND APPOINTED COUNSEL

WHAT IS THE DEFENDER REFERRAL AND REPRESENTATION UNIT (DRRU)?

The Defender Referral and Representation Unit (DRRU) of the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) was created in 2015 to represent immigrant detainees at the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) in Tacoma who have been through the King County criminal justice system or who have lived in King County and who cannot afford an immigration attorney.

If someone detained by immigration in the NWDC in Tacoma meets the King County eligibility requirement and does not have an attorney, DRRU will meet with him/her and **may** be able to provide direct representation in matters before the immigration court, the asylum office, or with other types of immigration filings.

WHY IS DRRU IMPORTANT FOR ME AND MY CLIENTS?

The Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project (WDAIP) remains the resource for you during the criminal case to get the constitutionally required advice on the immigration consequences of convictions. DRRU will not be providing advice to criminal defense lawyers. However, you can increase the chances of your hard work paying off by informing your clients to contact DRRU if they are detained by immigration. Without appointed counsel in immigration proceedings, over 80% of those in detention are forced to represent themselves in matters that are challenging and complicated. Even where excellent criminal defense work allows someone to fight their case in immigration court, the odds are stacked against someone without an attorney. Nationwide, detained individuals have less than a 5% chance of success without an attorney, while those who are represented have close to a 45% chance of winning a case to stay in the U.S.

HOW AND WHEN SHOULD DRRU BE CONTACTED?

At the end of an individual's criminal case or sentence, it is often uncertain if and when someone will be taken into ICE custody. As a result, we recommend that you give your clients a copy of the Record of Conviction along with the DRRU Guide for Criminal Defendants. Emphasize the helpfulness of calling DRRU as soon as immigration picks them up. Encourage them to show up for any attorney or NWIRP meetings at the detention center with all of their conviction records and other paperwork.

If you have any questions or if you hear that your client has been detained by immigration and you want to make a direct referral, please contact DRRU staff by e-mail at DRRU@nwirp.org or by phone at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.