

**BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS,
STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY**



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5,094 PEOPLE SERVED

Includes those who received both legal and social services.

- 2,138 LEGAL INFORMATION & REFERRAL
- 1,103 BRIEF/*PRO SE* SERVICES
- 869 DIRECT REPRESENTATION
- 557 INTAKES & CONSULTATIONS
- 408 LEGAL ADVICE
- 112 NAVIGATION & EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

1,409
HOURS
ATTORNEYS &
DOJ ACCREDITED
REPRESENTATIVES
VOLUNTEERED

130
VOLUNTEERS

9
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS TRAINED

44
HOURS
MEDICAL
PROFESSIONALS
VOLUNTEERED

96
HOURS
INTERPRETERS
& TRANSLATORS
VOLUNTEERED

**27 OUT
OF 33
COUNTIES
SERVED**

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| Bernalillo | Luna |
| Catron | McKinley |
| Chaves | Mora |
| Cibola | Otero |
| Colfax | Rio Arriba |
| Curry | Roosevelt |
| Dona Ana | San Juan |
| Eddy | San Miguel |
| Grant | Sandoval |
| Guadalupe | Santa Fe |
| Lea | Socorro |
| Lincoln | Taos |
| Los Alamos | Torrance |
| | Valencia |



DEAR FRIENDS

2022 brought both legal challenges to policies affecting immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees and an increasingly challenging economic context. Efforts to wind down the Trump-era Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) “deterrence” policy was thwarted due to anti-immigrant litigation filed by several states. Meanwhile, conflict in war-torn countries like Afghanistan caused refugees and asylum seekers to flee to New Mexico, increasing the need for NMILC’s services. On top of this, the volatile economic climate led to dramatic cost of living increases, leaving many immigrant and refugee families vulnerable.

We chose Breaking Down Barriers, Strengthening Community as this year’s theme for our annual report to underscore the institutional changes and individual transformations that your support makes possible during these challenging times. Your generosity enabled us to expand NMILC’s direct service team by nine staff, increasing the breadth and depth of our services.

Thanks to your support, our team is breaking down systemic barriers and making historic advances through policy campaigns, litigation, and advocacy. Our shared fight for justice is embodied in the moving profiles of NMILC clients included in this annual report.

You’ll read the stories of young brothers Omar and Christian, who avoided deportation as unaccompanied minors (page 6), and Yair, who is realizing his lifelong dream of becoming a college graduate and teacher (page 8). Each of these successes was made possible by these clients obtaining Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS).

There’s Blanca and her daughter, Paloma, who narrowly escaped abuse thanks to life-saving U visas (page 14). Rosalba found economic stability through the wraparound services she received (page 16), while Ramon became a naturalized citizen after contributing to New Mexico’s economy for more than 40 years (page 10).

Not all of the stories ended well. Kesley Vial (page 12), an asylum seeker from Brazil, died in ICE custody. Among our most imperative work is to prevent another death like that of Kesley’s.

This important work would not be possible without you — our donors, volunteers, pro bono professionals, community partners, and the foundations that support us. You are central to our fight for equality and justice for all immigrants. ¡Gracias!

**WE CHOSE THIS YEAR’S
THEME TO UNDERSCORE
THE INSTITUTIONAL
CHANGES AND INDIVIDUAL
TRANSFORMATIONS THAT YOUR
SUPPORT MAKES POSSIBLE**



¡Juntos, venceremos!

Jennifer Landau, Esq.
Executive Director



Mónica Córdova
Board Chair



"I believe safe, stable, and affordable housing is a human right to which all people are entitled regardless of their immigration status. Defending clients facing eviction and advocating for more humane housing policies in our state is my enormous honor."

-TAYLOR NOYA ◀

DISASTER RESILIENCE FELLOWS INCREASE EQUITABLE RECOVERY & SUPPORT ASYLUM SEEKERS

The COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented economic challenges for immigrant and asylum seeker communities. These challenges have been exacerbated by a confluence of other factors — rising anti-immigrant sentiment, migration-and asylum-detering US border policies like Title 42 and the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), pandemic-era political instability, war, and climate change that have caused more and more people to migrate or seek asylum.

To respond to these critical needs, we partnered with Equal Justice Works (EJW) to hire six Disaster Resilience Fellows who work to preserve immigrants' human rights and support equitable economic recovery in New Mexico through legal services in the following areas:

› HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Fellows addressed systemic barriers to accessing lawful immigration status, healthcare, and safe employment for asylum seekers fleeing humanitarian disasters. Over the past several months, our fellows:

- Provided comprehensive legal presentations and "know your rights" training to 300 detained migrants and asylum seekers, and submitted multiple civil rights complaints against ICE detention facilities in New Mexico.
- Secured the release from custody of medically vulnerable migrant and asylum seekers.
- Provided asylum presentations, *pro se* asylum application assistance, and direct representation for Afghan refugee families, altogether impacting over 400 individuals.

"The EJW Disaster Resilience Fellowship has enabled our team to engage in creative advocacy and representation of incarcerated immigrants and asylum seekers. From large-scale presentations at ICE detention centers, for immigrants about their rights and legal options, to community-based clinics to serve vulnerable populations, EJW has enabled us to do the work our community needs."

-SOPHIA GENOVESE ^



"I am beyond proud to continue NMILC's important licensing campaign and have another historic victory through the amendment to Rule 15-103 NMRA, making us the 9th state to make law licenses available to all qualified applicants, regardless of immigration status. We will continue to support immigrant entrepreneurs and professionals through our economic justice programming and co-create an entrepreneurship ecosystem for immigrants."

-JAZMÍN IRAZOQUI-RUIZ >

› HOUSING STABILITY & POST-COVID ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Fellows worked with noncitizens needing housing protection due to job loss and medical problems in light of the COVID pandemic and natural disasters in New Mexico. They assisted immigrants with licensing, work permits, and access to public benefits, and fostered economic independence for community members in abusive relationships. Fellows also identified systemic changes needed to address economic barriers for immigrants.



"One of the most impactful and meaningful things I've learned in this fellowship is how to be a trauma-informed advocate. I assist community members through this complex process in the most humane and dignified way possible."

-JESSICA ARREOLA ^

"There is so much disinformation around asylum and immigration detention and such an immense lack of resources available to these marginalized populations. I am grateful that through this fellowship, I am able to meet and help so many extraordinary people."

-ANNA TRILLO ◀



"Even though I am part of the immigrant community that I serve, the work I have done as an EJW Fellow has shown me that we are impacted by things, like the pandemic, in very different ways. This has informed and influenced the way I approach the work."

-LIZDEBETH CARRASCO ^

EJW Fellows Lizdebeth Carrasco and Jessica Arreola at the State Bar of New Mexico swearing-in ceremony held at the University of New Mexico's Law School in October.



Join Equal Justice Works in supporting NMILC as we change the face of the legal profession — one Fellow at a time. [Scan to learn more.](#)





FIGHTING FOR UNIVERSAL REPRESENTATION FOR CHILDREN FACING DEPORTATION

This year NMILC was invited by the Vera Institute of Justice to join a national network of legal service providers who represent children released from detention centers near the border. This national movement for universal representation is seeking to establish a federal right to representation for all immigrants facing deportation, starting with children. The Vera Institute has contracted with NMILC to represent every child released from a detention center who is reunited with a family member in New Mexico.

Asylum approval rates in the jurisdiction of our regional Immigration Court (El Paso) are the lowest in the country at around 4%. It is critical to the well-being of these asylum seekers that we also evaluate alternative legal options for which they may be eligible. Due to the recent increase of minors crossing without parents to seek asylum, there is an increased opportunity for children to obtain immigration status by receiving Special Immigrant Juvenile status (SIJS), a humanitarian immigration process for children who have been abandoned by one or both parents. SIJS results in permanent residency for eligible unaccompanied minor clients. To apply, the immigrant minor must first obtain a state court order establishing abuse, abandonment or neglect, generally before the age of 18. NMILC has a robust *pro bono* network to assist our clients to obtain the needed predicate order in state court.

Omar and Christian (pseudonyms) are unaccompanied minors who benefited from our Vera Institute partnership and SIJS representation. The boys were left virtually orphaned when their abusive father died in Central America while their mother was in the US attempting to provide for the family. The brothers moved in with their grandmother, but were harassed by local gangs. Fearing for their safety, their grandmother fled to Mexico with her two young grandchildren in late 2019. The three of them survived in Mexico for about a year, doing odd jobs as a means to support themselves. In 2021, at the ages of 12 and 14, Omar



and Christian arrived at our southern border, where they were separated from their grandmother and put in a shelter run by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). The boys were held in the shelter for two months until they were reunited with their mother, thanks to Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services (DMRS) in El Paso, Texas, another partner agency of the Vera Institute network.

A part of the Vera Institute network, NMILC was able to transfer the case from DMRS and begin the SIJS process here in New Mexico. Omar and Christian both qualified for SIJS relief due to their father's abuse and abandonment of them in Central America. Their SIJS abandonment qualification proved vital in getting their cases in immigration court dismissed. As they undergo the rest of the SIJS process, the boys have been approved for Medicaid and have received much-needed medical care. Omar and Christian are also now in school, learning English and excelling in math, all the while making profound and important relationships with children their own age.

NMILC's partnership with the Vera Institute has created seamless representation for unaccompanied children, allowing for important case information to be shared among network partners to ensure ongoing representation. Prior to this partnership, NMILC could only represent such children if they called our intake line. Now as the only legal service provider member of the Vera Institute network in New Mexico, NMILC receives all referrals for unaccompanied minors who are released from detention and placed in New Mexico through the Vera Institute's national Unaccompanied Child Online Referral Database. We provide universal representation to unaccompanied minors to ensure that every child has access to free representation. This year NMILC has represented 25 children like Omar and Christian through our partnership with the Vera Institute. Through this contract, our team will increase the number of children served in New Mexico each year over the next five years.

What happens when a child appears alone in immigration court?

While a person in immigration proceedings is entitled to be represented by a lawyer if they can afford it, there is no constitutional or even statutory right to appointed counsel in immigration proceedings. That means those who cannot afford a lawyer must appear in court alone, including children.



Preserving the Right to Asylum Through Mendez-Rojas Litigation

Immigration law requires that asylum seekers file applications for asylum within one year of last entering the United States. Unfortunately, before the Mendez-Rojas litigation was settled in federal court, officials didn't always tell asylum seekers of the application deadline. Now, thanks to this litigation, some asylum seekers previously denied protection due to missing the filing deadline have been able to access relief. NMILC helped asylum seeker clients preserve their right to qualify for asylum by helping them file before the April 2022 litigation relief deadline.

NMILC is currently the only legal service provider in New Mexico providing free legal services to asylum seekers. Scan to join our growing *pro bono* attorney team and help us support children who qualify for SIJS status.





EMPOWERING IMMIGRANT YOUTH FOR SUCCESS THROUGH SIJS & DACA



Yair's Story: Paying It Forward

This past May, Yair Romero accomplished his lifelong dream of graduating with a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education. Yair's success was made possible because of the relief he received when he acquired Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). This status allows immigrant children or youth who have been abandoned, abused, or neglected by a parent to apply for permanent residency and eventually citizenship. Yair fled cartel and gang activity in his hometown of Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico joining his mother in New Mexico in 2014.

"I felt like I was following the wrong steps, being led by bad influences," Yair says. "I made the decision to move in with my mom because I wanted something better for myself."

Yair enrolled at Highland High School, where he learned of NMILC during a community presentation in 2015. He knew he would need a job to be able to pay for college tuition, yet he also understood his immigration status would make finding employment difficult. That's why he turned to our team for help. Monica Newcomer Miller, SIJS Managing Attorney at NMILC, helped Yair apply for SIJS and obtain a work permit while he waited for his green card to be approved. He graduated high school in 2019. Thanks to the work permit he received, Yair was able to work throughout his entire college career, allowing him to graduate in four years.

While the more highly publicized Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) also provides protection from deportation and work authorization for



"I am grateful for Monica's hard work on my case. Thanks to her, I was able to find a job when I needed it most."

—YAIR ROMERO

immigrant youth, Yair's arrival date disqualified him from applying for the program. This is an unfortunate situation that thousands of young undocumented people face. To overcome this barrier, NMILC works in collaboration with community partners, *pro bono* attorneys, government agencies, private law firms, and higher education institutions to provide accessible, free legal assessments and services to immigrant youth, like Yair, who qualify for SIJS across the state.

In 2022, our staff also provided legal and social services to immigrant children and youth in custody through our collaboration with New Mexico's Children, Youth & Families Department. Overall, immigrant children and youth applying for SIJS status saw positive policy changes despite a legacy of federal backlogs that have left many of these applicants without the protections and permits needed to survive while they wait for approval.

Recently, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) updated its policy manual to provide deferred action for SIJS, providing both deportation protection and work permits while their cases are pending. A final rule also updated current SIJS guidelines to provide more clarity and guidance on the filing process so young adults can proceed with their lives while they wait for the opportunity to apply for a green card, just like Yair was able to do.

Now a college graduate, Yair plans to pay it forward through his career as a teacher by helping connect immigrant students to services like those provided by NMILC.

"Never stop fighting for your dreams," Yair says. "No matter where you come from, there is always a way to move forward and reach your goals."

OUR IMPACT IN 2022

326 IMMIGRANT YOUTH PROVIDED LEGAL ASSISTANCE WITH DACA

289 IMMIGRANT YOUTH REPRESENTED WITH SIJS CASES

16 PRO BONO ATTORNEYS SUPPORTED SIJS CASES



Expanding Our Reach in Rural New Mexico

Thanks to the support of the LANL Foundation and the Corrine Wolf Fellowship, NMILC has increased our outreach and capacity in rural communities to ensure students like Yair can access SIJS before they age out. Our team is building relationships with schools in northern New Mexico to ensure that K-12 students in rural communities are aware of their legal rights. NMILC has partnered with Las Cumbres Community Services to have monthly legal clinics in Española and Taos. So far this year, Jessica Martinez, NMILC Staff Attorney & Corinne Wolf Fellow, and Carla Law, NMILC Partnerships Coordinator, have trained 47 social workers and case managers across the state.

Scan to learn more about our work and victories with Special Immigrant Juvenile Status .





INCREASING IMMIGRANT POWER THROUGH LEGAL SERVICES

Ramon's Story: Removing Barriers On the Path to Citizenship

It's astonishing to hear Ramon Hernandez recount his immigration story. Even though he suffers from dementia, he can still recount his migrant journey vividly. He remembers the chilling waters of the Rio Grande he crossed at the age of 20 back in 1974 with his uncle in search of better job opportunities. It would not be his first journey between the United States and Mexico. In December of 1976, he moved to the U.S. permanently, eventually settling in New Mexico.

Ramon came close to being deported in 1987 and was already in removal proceedings when an immigration judge granted him Lawful Permanent

Residency (LPR) status. For 16 years, Ramon worked installing cement floors in homes, before changing employment to the Walmart Distribution Center in Los Lunas. Ramon applied for citizenship in 2020. Like many LPRs under the xenophobic reign of the Trump administration, he wanted the right to vote.

"I decided to take matters into my own hands, take action," Ramon says. "I wanted my voice to be heard and also to take advantage of the benefits and rights that come with being a citizen."

That's when he reached out to NMILC's remote workshop team. NMILC submitted Ramon's naturalization application and N-648 form

Ramon at his naturalization ceremony. Ramon voted for the first time in the 2022 midterm elections.



"I was able to advocate for Ramon at the interview, as the interpreter provided by USCIS did not do a great job. It was rewarding for me to represent him."

—RENEE WOLTERS

in June of 2021. N-648 is a medical certification that is used to request an exemption from the English and/or civics testing requirement for naturalization due to physical, developmental, or mental disability — in Ramon's case, dementia. With the support of his family and the help of Renee Wolters, a *pro bono* Department of Justice Accredited Representative and longtime NMILC volunteer, Ramon's application was approved. He took his naturalization oath in June 2022. Ramon voted for the first time this November, and he plans to do so every election moving forward.

Ramon's story is one echoed across our immigrant community. LPRs face many obstacles that can discourage them from applying for citizenship, including language access and financial barriers. These obstacles are even worse for LPRs with disabilities. In 2021, our citizenship and residency team focused on meeting the needs of this unique population of immigrants. As a result, our team reached a 100% success rate on N-648 medical waivers. Renee helped Ramon with interpretation issues during his naturalization interview, and responded to a request for more evidence. She also successfully helped Ramon apply for an application fee reduction, reducing the fee by \$300.



NMILC's Citizenship & Residency Program Coordinator Nora Hernandez at her naturalization ceremony. Nora voted for the first time in the 2022 midterm elections.

COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT



FIGHTING FOR IMMIGRANT REPRESENTATION TOGETHER

"NMILC has been a central ally to Encuentro since its inception in 2010. This long standing collaboration has provided our citizenship students and instructors with important

legal information, crucial resources, essential guidance, and a network of passionate advocates, all of which helps to make the difficult path to naturalization a community effort."

—TERESA GUEVARA, Educational Programs Director, Encuentro



OUR IMPACT IN 2022

536 INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED CITIZENSHIP & RESIDENCY RENEWAL SERVICES

252 DOCUMENTS TRANSLATED BY VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to the financial contributions of donors like you and the tireless efforts of volunteers like Renee, Ramon and countless others can access free legal services to realize their dreams. Scan to make a gift today.





FIGHTING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

NMILC Fights to End Immigrant Detention in New Mexico

NMILC has provided legal aid and advocacy services at New Mexico’s Torrance County Detention Facility (TCDF) since 2017. In addition to securing the release of more than 20 people from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody, NMILC led comprehensive legal presentations and “know your rights” training for 300 detained migrants and asylum seekers. Through our work at TCDF, we’ve witnessed and heard first-hand accounts of inhumane living conditions and abuses, including medical neglect, inedible food, insufficient staffing, and pepper spraying of inmates protesting poor conditions.

NMILC, in partnership with the ACLU-NM, Innovation Law Lab, JFON El Paso, New Mexico Dream Team, Detention Watch Network, Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, and the Santa Fe Dreamers Project, is fighting for immigrants and asylum seekers detained at TCDF and the two other detention centers in New Mexico. Our actions include filing civil rights complaints with the Department of Homeland Security on the grounds of medical neglect, physical abuse, due process violations, extremely unsafe and unsanitary living conditions, misconduct by ICE officials, and more. NMILC also filed Freedom of Information Act litigation and is the plaintiff in ongoing litigation against CoreCivic-run detention centers in New Mexico alongside the ACLU-NM. Together, we are seeking to end the use of pepper spray against ICE detainees and to hold CoreCivic responsible for its use against peaceful detainees, including a group of 24 asylum seekers in May 2022.

Nothing underscores the urgent need to end immigrant detention in New Mexico like the story of Kesley Vial, a Brazilian asylum seeker detained at TCDF. He completed suicide in August 2022 while in ICE custody at TCDF.



NMILC Communications Manager Flaviano Graciano speaks to the media about collaborative efforts to close down immigrant detention facilities in New Mexico.



HISTORIC VICTORIES FOR WORKERS

NMILC, community advocates, and partners have fought to dismantle commercial licensing barriers for immigrants in New Mexico since 2017. Senate Bill 137 passed during the 2020 New Mexico Legislative Session, extending professional and occupational license access to all New Mexicans regardless of immigration status. This historic win was the result of NMILC’s collaboration with the Center for Civic Policy, New Mexico Voices for Children, and the New Mexico Dream Team. To eliminate statutory barriers to occupational licenses for undocumented professionals not covered by SB 137, our team and partners successfully advocated for SB 219 during the 2021 Legislative Session — another historic victory for workers.

In 2022, we set our sights on the New Mexico Supreme Court. Due to our tenacious advocacy, the Supreme Court amended the State Bar of New Mexico’s admission Rule 15-103 NMRA, extending licensing to practice law to all qualifying applicants, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status. This victory was a direct result of years of advocacy and political power-building by Jazmín Irazoqui-Ruiz — a directly affected NMILC Senior Attorney and Equal Justice Works Fellow — alongside NMILC *pro bono* attorneys Maureen Sanders, David Stout, and George Bach.



NMILC community allies light candles at the vigil held in front of the Albuquerque ICE offices to honor the life of Brazilian asylum seeker, Kesley Vial, who died while in ICE custody.

Kesley is the 225th individual to die under ICE custody since 2004. This past year, abuses and mistreatment of these incarcerated individuals has grown unabated, while arbitrary denials of release reached a staggering 99%. In March 2022, the Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released a report calling for the closure of TCDF due to inhumane and unsanitary conditions that jeopardize the safety of detained migrants. If ICE and CoreCivic had followed the OIG’s recommendation, Kesley would still be alive today. Rather than closing the facility, ICE transferred more migrants and asylum seekers into it, increasing the dire need for legal services provided by NMILC.



JAZMÍN IRAZOQUI-RUIZ NMILC Senior Attorney & Equal Justice Works Disaster Resilience Fellow

“I am excited that others in the pipeline will no longer wonder whether their immigration status will be a barrier to becoming an attorney and serving New Mexican communities. We have been advocating for this amendment since my admission into the NM State Bar in 2017. Almost five years later, the Court has removed an unnecessary barrier to bar admission, which results in economic mobility and stability for immigrant families and children in our state.”

BREAK DOWN BARRIERS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS of immigrant workers by becoming a sponsor of NMILC’s new Advocacy Fellowship. Contact Quiana Salazar-King at qsalazar-king@nmilc.org to learn more.

We need your help to continue our fight to end immigrant detention in New Mexico. Scan to make a tax-deductible contribution today and call your representatives to demand accountability.





SUPPORTING SURVIVORS PURSUING THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS

Blanca’s & Paloma’s Story: Regaining Control of Their Lives

This year, our team filed its first U visa delay litigation in Federal District Court. We were able to obtain work authorization and deferred action status for a mother and daughter who have been awaiting relief since 2017. U visas encourage immigrant survivors of crime to report and cooperate with law enforcement in exchange for legal status. However, U visa applicants can face long waiting periods due to backlogs. Threat of deportation and lack of legal work authorization prevent many victims from leaving their abusive situations.

For Blanca and her daughter, Paloma (pseudonyms), being in this limbo perpetuated a cycle of abuse. During their time awaiting relief, not only did Paloma witness Blanca’s continued abuse, she began to experience domestic violence in her own relationship. Already fearing deportation, Blanca faced continual threats by her abuser, including threats to have her killed in her country of origin if she were deported. The economic hardship of COVID-19 made the situation worse as Blanca and Paloma also had trouble maintaining employment due to their undocumented status.

NMILC filed federal litigation to challenge the government’s delay to protect crime victims like Blanca and Paloma, successfully arguing that it was unreasonable to take over four years to adjudicate their U visas. While only 10,000 U visas may be issued a year, DHS’s regulation requires USCIS to place approvable applicants on a wait list and provide them with the legal right to work. As a result of this case, Blanca and Paloma were finally given some protection and the legal right to work, and for NMILC it signaled that USCIS’s delay in U visa cases can be challenged successfully in federal court.



PETER KATEL is a court-certified interpreter who has volunteered with NMILC for more than 5 years. In 2022, Peter helped interpret psychologists’ interviews with migrants who are victims of crime as part of our survivor advancement team. Peter says he is glad to help clients by interpreting for them during vulnerable conversations that often require them to relive traumatic events suffered in their home countries.

“I know that people flee their homelands for all sorts of painful reasons. My parents and grandparents were refugees in a succession of countries. It is an honor to be able to help people explain the often complicated details of what they have endured.”

Carla Law (left), NMILC Partnerships Coordinator, meets with a rural community partner (right) to discuss legal clinic agenda.



Increasing Legal Resources in Rural New Mexico

Rural survivors of domestic violence face many barriers when applying for victim services. To deal with this urgent need, NMILC provides U visa, T visa, and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) services in the rural northern and southern regions of our state — communities that otherwise lack free immigration legal resources. In 2022, our team provided 11 in-person legal clinics and six presentations on NMILC survivor services through partnerships with established local organizations like the Las Cumbres Community Services Center in Taos and Española, and Phoenix House in Hobbs. We have screened 40 survivors in rural New Mexico since March.



NMILC Paralegal Maricruz Melero takes a client’s fingerprints for their case file.

OUR IMPACT IN 2022

SURVIVORS PURSUING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT PETITIONS, U OR T VISAS

382 CONSULTATIONS

401 DIRECT REPRESENTATION

Help survivors like Blanca and Paloma thrive with a contribution to NMILC. Scan to give today.





EXPANDING SERVICES FOR HOUSING STABILITY & ECONOMIC RECOVERY



Rosalba's Story: From Surviving to Thriving

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to disproportionately affect our immigrant and refugee communities. They have less access to resources that reduce the impact of a disaster and facilitate recovery. In March of this year, despite increases in rent and mortgages, the eviction moratorium ended in Bernalillo County, leaving many low-income immigrant and refugee clients without stable housing. To make matters worse, many industries that employ low-income immigrants were hit by the pandemic. To bridge the gap between the community we serve and the resources available to them, this year NMILC provided clients with holistic services that included housing stability aid and economic recovery assistance.

Rosalba, originally from Parral, Chihuahua, Mexico, migrated to Albuquerque in 2002. Escaping abuse by her then-husband, she and her son sought safety at a domestic violence shelter where she began to figure out her next steps. Rosalba's drive to succeed, coupled with the help of community partners SAFE House and Encuentro, motivated her to take classes at Central New Mexico University. She graduated with an associate degree in early childhood education and a home health care certification. Rosalba's career was flourishing when COVID hit. Her home health aide client was one of the early victims of COVID, leaving Rosalba without employment — and an important friend.

Rosalba was unable to pay her rent when she contacted our team. Sonia Ramirez, one of our Pathways Navigators, helped Rosalba successfully apply for rental and utilities assistance from the City of Albuquerque three times. Still housed, Rosalba is now working with Sonia on her legal immigration case. She shares her story to motivate other families from her community who need NMILC's assistance.



Closing the Gap in Eviction Defense & Housing Security

Lack of awareness of tenant rights and available rental assistance funds, combined with concerns about immigration consequences, often keeps immigrants from seeking legal assistance to avoid eviction. In addition, many immigrants are barred from receiving housing services from New Mexico Legal Aid due to Legal Service Corporation restrictions on serving undocumented immigrants.

NMILC has taken on a four-pronged approach to increase housing security for our clients who are disproportionately impacted by the current housing affordability crisis and the end of the eviction moratorium. NMILC:

- 1 **Provided navigation services** to 119 clients receiving legal services, including support with accessing emergency rental and utility assistance, and screened 685 clients for public benefit eligibility.
- 2 **Advocated at the state and local level** for the State of New Mexico's Emergency Rental Assistance Program to ensure that receiving financial assistance does not impact current or future legal status.
- 3 **Increased legal service capacity** by training NMILC attorneys on eviction defense to expand the legal services available to immigrant tenants at risk of displacement and address the gap in services to immigrants at New Mexico Legal Aid.
- 4 **Outreach and education efforts** to ensure that NMILC's client base and callers are informed of their rights, resources, and options, and are better prepared to successfully resolve their housing issues.

Our team at an eviction prevention clinic held by the City of Albuquerque.

Our Economic Justice & Policy Legal Assistant presenting at the Color Theory Pre-Launch Training at the WESST Enterprise Center.



NMILC AND COLOR THEORY PARTNERS WORK TOGETHER TO HELP IMMIGRANTS POST COVID-19

To help promote post COVID-19 economic recovery within our low-income immigrant communities, NMILC continues to be part of the Color Theory Collaborative. The Collaborative seeks to support low-income, marginalized entrepreneurs of color and their families living in Bernalillo County through a shared ecosystem of resources and support. NMILC's role in Color Theory is to provide legal advice and presentations to immigrant and mixed-status entrepreneurs, current NMILC clients, and individuals who benefit from our team's licensing advocacy work.



CLIENT HIGHLIGHT

Yessica, who graduated from Encuentro's Home Health Aide Class, took a business course from business incubator

WESST, and received legal support from NMILC to start her home health business. This fall, Yessica opened her small business, increasing her ability to provide for her family. She is also receiving NMILC immigration legal assistance. Since January, our team has provided legal information and education to 500 community members through our Economic Justice services.

Please donate to NMILC today to ensure women like Rosalba live life on their terms. Scan to make your donation.





MAKE A DIFFERENCE: VOLUNTEER WITH NMILC



During our Special Immigrant Juvenile Status CLE and Legal Clinic in October 2022, 35 *pro bono* attorneys provided services to SIJS clients.

Legal and medical *pro bonos*, court-certified interpreters, and volunteers greatly increase our team's capacity to serve our low-income immigrant and refugee communities. In 2022, 227 *pro bono* professionals and volunteers assisted immigrant community members who were unable to afford legal services.

Volunteers provide these vital NMILC services:

- › *Pro bono* attorneys directly represent, provide *pro se* services support, and advocate for immigrants.
- › Medical *pro bono* professionals provide psychiatric evaluations for asylum seekers.
- › Volunteer translators and interpreters remove language barriers for clients.
- › Administrative volunteers assist staff with data, filing, and administrative projects.
- › Fundraising volunteers raise money to continue our fight.

WE COULDN'T DO OUR WORK WITHOUT OUR EXCEPTIONAL TEAM OF *PRO BONO* PROFESSIONALS AND VOLUNTEERS, WHOSE TIME AND EXPERTISE ARE TRANSFORMATIONAL FOR OUR LOW-INCOME IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY IN NEW MEXICO.



"All immigrants have to go through the immigration process, and when they can't afford the process, they turn to NMILC. We as lawyers have to recognize that and help where we can."

—DEB SOLOVE
Pro Bono Attorney
SIJS Team



"Volunteering with NMILC is so important to me. As part of a family of immigrants, I know how difficult and overwhelming it can be to navigate legal immigration processes."

—JENNIFER CAMPO
Translation Volunteer
Administrative Logistics Volunteer



"As a future social worker, it's important to become that bridge for immigrants who lack resources and services — so they can open up and feel free to express their needs — to be able to support them in a better way."

—OSCAR CORRAL
Pathways Volunteer
Survivor Advancement Team



"This work is close to my heart. It is really important to me to give back to the community in any way that I can. With these Afghan asylum cases in particular, I felt a sense of responsibility to help the families who had given up everything to help the U.S. in Afghanistan and are now having to resettle in a different place, often without family members; it wouldn't have felt right to charge for services."

—EVA EITZEN
Pro Bono Attorney
Survivor Advancement Team



"Pro bono attorneys and volunteers provide enormously invaluable and hard-to-get services to the immigrant community. I'm happy to assist NMILC's communications and development work with my editing experience."

—DONNA ROXEY
Copyediting Volunteer
Communications Team



"The most rewarding part of the cases is having the opportunity to build close relationships with clients and trust to support their case, especially when they are working toward permanent status."

—JAVIER GARCIA
Pro Bono Attorney
SIJS Team



"Volunteering is important to me because it's enjoyable to help a cause close to my heart. I alone can't enact the changes I want to see in the world, but being of some small help to a team of dedicated advocates like NMILC is empowering in its own way."

—RUBY RODRIGUEZ
Translation Volunteer
Remote Workshop Team



"Being an NMILC pro bono interpreter is so enriching because of the attorneys and clients we get to work with. To be able to provide that type of language access, as an interpreter, I will get more out of the experience than we can ever give to you. It's very fulfilling! I look forward to every time I get to volunteer."

—MICHAEL KAGAN
Pro Bono Interpreter
Survivor Advancement Team

Scan to become a *pro bono* attorney or court-certified interpreter to help immigrant community members who are unable to afford legal services.



NMILC RECEIVES MALSA FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE AWARD

NMILC was honored with the 2022 Fighting for Justice Award by the University of New Mexico School of Law Mexican American Law Student Association (MALSA). This prestigious award celebrates our team's work in advancing justice. We thank MALSA for recognizing the staff, volunteers, *pro bonos*, community partners, donors, and funders who serve our low-income immigrant and refugee community.



ENGAGING YOUTH THROUGH "ARTIVISM"

This spring we held our annual youth art design contest, engaging students and schools across New Mexico. The contest reclaims the narrative around immigration and our border communities by creating lasting cultural change through "artivism." This year's theme was "Self Portrait: Life in a Border State," and 79 students submitted designs.



Anna Bononcini, 11th Grade, Cibola High School, 1st Place Winning Design



FISCAL YEAR 2022

REVENUE SOURCES

\$1,802,601	Private Foundations
\$1,185,014	Local, State, and Federal Government
\$298,459	Individual Contributions
\$154,965	Donated Professional Services
\$9,145	Miscellaneous Income

\$3,450,193 TOTAL REVENUE

87% PROGRAMMING

87¢
of every dollar is spent on essential programming

**11% ADMINISTRATION
2% FUNDRAISING**

EXPENSES

EXPENSES

\$2,222,458	Program Services
\$282,265	Administration
\$47,064	Fundraising

\$2,551,787 TOTAL EXPENSES

VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



In July, NMILC *pro bono* attorney **Valerie McLaughlin** won bond for a detained asylum seeker from Ecuador after engaging in community fundraising and powerful advocacy to raise money for his release.

Adrian Gervassi
 Alexa Whaley
 Amy A. Herrera
 Ana B. Lopez Montoya
 Andrea E. Solis
 Andres Goldschmidt
 Andrew Tafoya Leverett
 Andy David Padilla Morales
 Angelina Xing
 Anh Tu Duong
 Anna Prawdzik Hull
 Aurora Arreola
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Attorney **Sandi Gilley** turned her passion for bike riding into an NMILC fundraiser that raised over \$10,000 to help our mission.

You can too! Contact our Director of Community Engagement Quiana Salazar-King at qsalazar-king@nmilc.org to learn more about different ways you can donate to NMILC.



GIVING WITH NMILC

You can make a gift that will strengthen the future of the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center and protect our mission to advance justice and equity by adding the organization to your will or estate plan.

A planned gift as part of your estate:

- › Is easy to arrange—a simple paragraph added to your will is all it takes.
- › Preserves your savings and cash flow.
- › Can be changed or revoked as needed.
- › Allows you to be far more generous than you ever thought possible.
- › Costs you nothing during your lifetime.

You can also:

- › **Make NMILC a beneficiary** of your life insurance policy by simply requesting a form from your insurance company and filing it.
- › **Contribute some or all of your IRA.** If you are 70.5 years of age or older, you can make a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from your IRA.

Contact **Quiana Salazar-King**, Director of Community Engagement, at qsalazar-king@nmilc.org or visit nmilc.org/wills.

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FUNDER SPOTLIGHT



Special thanks to **Equal Justice Works** and the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation** for helping increase our team's capacity to serve our low-income immigrant and refugee communities by sponsoring six Disaster Resilience fellows at NMILC.

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In October, NMILC community partner and sponsor **Meow Wolf** hosted a naturalization ceremony. At the ceremony, Nora Hernandez, NMILC's Citizenship & Residency Program Coordinator, took her own oath for citizenship with her family present.

SPECIAL THANKS

NMILC extends special thanks to the following companies and law firms that generously support our mission to empower low-income immigrant communities.

Campeón/Champion \$5,000



Embajador/Ambassador \$3,000



Aliado/Ally \$1,500



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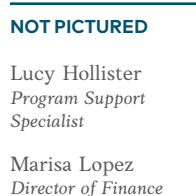
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