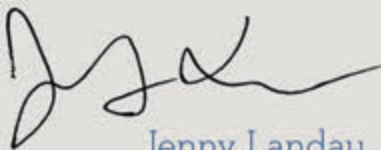


Working to make access to justice affordable for New Mexico's immigrants and promote knowledge of legal rights and the immigration process.

Dear Friends,

Access to the affordable immigration services provided by NMILC enables immigrants to obtain legal status, leading to better jobs, reunification with family members, access to credit and bank accounts, access to healthcare, safety for victims of crimes, increased educational opportunities for children and adults, and full participation in the civic life of our neighborhoods and communities. Because we recognize that the legal needs of immigrant families are intertwined with challenges to obtaining economic security, education, and health access, we continue to develop and strengthen our partnerships with community-based organizations, clinics, schools, and social service agencies to maximize our collective impact.

This newsletter highlights our work with a few of NMILC's community partners. We are grateful for their support in improving access to justice for New Mexico's immigrant community.



Jenny Landau
Executive Director

Partners Against Domestic Violence

Ana*, a woman with an infectious smile, is a caring and determined mother of three, and a client of NMILC fighting against deportation. Ana's husband Juan brought her to northern New Mexico to settle down and start a family. Emotional abuse by Juan turned into physical abuse: not only did he threaten to separate Ana from her children, but the violence also escalated to the point that Juan put a gun to Ana's head and said he would kill her if she sought help. Ana went to a crisis shelter, but even there Juan sent threats to her through family members.



Attorneys Jessica Martin (NMILC) & Elizabeth Rourke (Enlace)

Ana reported to the police and then fled to Mexico, where she faced death threats from Juan's family, who was connected to a cartel. Fearing for her life, and for her children, Ana returned to the United States to seek asylum and was automatically placed in deportation proceedings. Due to limited resources, Ana would have had to fight her case in immigration court without an attorney by her side before NMILC's collaboration with Enlace Comunitario, a nonprofit that serves Spanish-speaking victims of domestic violence.

Through a partnership with Enlace, NMILC is the only nonprofit that represents New Mexican domestic violence survivors who face deportation. "Before our collaboration with NMILC, our case managers and counselors were desperate to find legal assistance for immigrant victims," says Claudia Medina, Enlace's Executive Director. "Lack of immigration status is one of the primary reasons that immigrant victims do not leave an unsafe home. Now, NMILC attorneys are on site at our office and completely accessible to our staff and clients."

Once Ana went to Enlace, she was connected with NMILC attorney Jessica Martin. Jessica works with Ana's counselor and family law attorney, Elizabeth Rourke, at Enlace to provide comprehensive legal and emotional support for Ana and her children as she fights deportation. After obtaining the necessary certification from the New Mexico State Police Department that Ana has helped in a criminal investigation of Juan, Jessica has filed an application on Ana's behalf to legalize her status. According to Jessica, "Partnering with advocates at Enlace Comunitario allows NMILC to better support our clients and each other in our work to promote the safety and stability of hundreds of women like Ana."

**The names in this client story have been changed to protect client confidentiality.*

We are happy to announce that the U.S. Department of Justice has awarded NMILC in partnership with Enlace Comunitario the prestigious Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV) grant. This three-year grant will allow us to offer coordinated services for domestic violence survivors at risk of deportation.

DID YOU KNOW?

Even with free or low-cost legal assistance, many of our clients cannot afford the government's hefty filing fees. To address this need, we have partnered with Prosperity Works, Native Community Finance, and NM Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice to offer our clients microloans, which help our clients apply for immigration benefits while building a positive credit history.

“I feel that it’s a gateway for something bigger. I have a lot of dreams and hopes, and a lot to offer as a student and a worker.”

- Ismael

Our Community Partners

- ACE Leadership High School
- Catholic Charities of Santa Fe
- Catholic Charities of Las Cruces
- UNM's El Centro de La Raza
- El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos Encuentro
- Enlace Comunitario
- Native Community Finance
- NM Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice
- NM DREAMers in Action
- NM Forum for Youth in Community
- Partnership for Community Action
- PB&J Family Services
- Prosperity Works
- RFK Charter School
- Somos Un Pueblo Unido
- South Valley Academy
- Young Children's Health Center

A Better Future By Design

This year, NMILC helped Ismael to obtain deferred action through our partnership with ACE Leadership High School. Ismael's parents brought him to the United States when he was just six years old, and he remembers little about what life was like in Mexico. When the Obama administration announced the deferred action program in the summer of 2012, Ismael's parents wanted him to apply. However, there was no way they could afford the fees that private attorneys charge.

Ismael was able to take advantage of a successful partnership between NMILC and ACE Leadership High School to obtain legal help. ACE, which is short for Architecture, Construction and Engineering, is an Albuquerque charter school that focuses on project-based learning for students who have had difficulty in traditional classrooms. The school not only provides comprehensive resources to shepherd students through the process of getting a high school diploma, but also assists with job placement after graduation. According to Tony Monfiletto, co-founder of ACE, "We invest a lot of resources in getting our students to graduation with marketable skills, and we match them with an employer who wants to hire them. That is all for nothing, though, if our students cannot legally work. NMILC's services have become a vital part of our school community." Through partnerships with local schools, NMILC provides legal assistance at no cost to students applying for deferred action as well as students facing deportation and applying for permanent immigration status.

While at ACE, Ismael fell in love with design and construction. "My teachers pushed me to my limit and made me stronger," Ismael explains. "It amazed me what I could build myself, in my own style and with my own hands." Now that Ismael has deferred action, he has been able to work part-time while finishing school. Ismael expects to graduate from ACE in May and then begin studies at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM).



"Before NMILC's presence on-site at PB&J, our social workers did not even know how to identify immigrant families that were at risk of separation."

Susannah Burke
Executive Director
PB&J Family Services

NMILC is working with filmmaker Daniel Sonis to develop a documentary about Deferred Action in New Mexico. To be one of the first ones to see the documentary, be sure to like NMILC on Facebook.



"NMILC's services have become a vital part of our school community."

Tony Monfiletto
Co-founder of ACE and Executive
Director of the New Mexico
Center for School Leadership.