

San Antonio, Texas

Lucia, her husband and four children had been seeking protection for almost a year before arriving to the United States. She and her family left Venezuela because after she faced persecution for speaking out against the government for denying her children healthcare based on their class status. The video she shared accusing the government circulated throughout social media, and consequently resulted in government officials targeting her and her family. Lucia decided to leave her home country of Venezuela fearing for her and her children's lives.

Lucia and her family tried to seek asylum in neighboring countries but faced discrimination and mistreatment due to her children's disabilities. Lucia decided that her only choice was to seek asylum in the United States. She finally made it to the country a year after fleeing Venezuela and came to LIRS in search of guidance and assistance.

When she arrived at LIRS, one of her children's hearing aids was malfunctioning and the youngest child needed to see a doctor to treat their own hearing disability. It was challenging finding a doctor to help cover the necessary doctor visit for her children. A doctor's visit was particularly important for Lucia's children to receive accommodations in school. As of November, LIRS Welcome Center were able to help Lucia's family with shelter, food pantries, school enrollment, and assistance submitting their asylum applications. LIRS case managers also helped find a non-profit to help the children with their doctor visits and hearing aids. Currently Lucia and family are waiting for their asylum interview, but with relief that their children can be properly diagnosed and receive their hearing aids. Most importantly the children can attend a school that accommodates their disability.

Las Cruces, New México

While we work directly with migrants living in southern New Mexico and those who transit through our local migrant respite/day centers, we also support asylum seekers who reach out to us through word of mouth as capacity allows. In September LFSRM staff received a call from a Honduran family who was admitted with humanitarian parole through a port of entry in California. The family did not understand their paperwork, nor the required steps they had to take. Through an acquaintance, the father of the family contacted us asking for assistance. The family was living in Miami, Florida, and needed to be connected to support. Through our work with asylum seekers who travel to Miami, a top destination city, we know that connecting to agencies there is challenging. We were able to make a direct referral to a local advocacy group to be a local point of contact and resource for the family.

The need for reliable information and services among asylum seekers is great. Nevertheless, building and maintaining connections with service and advocacy groups across the U.S. helps bridge individuals with support agencies.

New York, New York

A and B are a young Venezuelan couple with two children. After entering the U.S., the couple was separated because they were not legally married. Luckily, they were bussed to NY where the family became reunited. When they came to the Welcome Center at LSSNY in October, they were inadequately dressed for the fall. They did not have coats and were wearing flip flops. They were staying in a city shelter, which served food on a first-come-first-served basis, because the shelter did not have enough food for everyone. This family had experienced several days, in which they did not eat all day except for dinner. The shelter worker helped the family apply for government food assistance.

At LSSNY, they were thankful to hear about the services offered by the Welcome Center program during the assessment process. A service plan was created for them. The case manager referred them to nearby food pantries. The parents received winter coats and shoes, and coats for the children. A case manager helped them notify ICE of their address change and to request for a check-in appointment with the local ICE field office. The case manager also taught them how to use the EOIR hotline to determine when their immigration court date will be. The father was referred for Spanish literacy classes with Mixteca, a community organization that LSSNY partners with to serve Latinx immigrants. Over the upcoming service period, they will receive a legal consultation to assess their eligibility for immigration relief and for work authorizations. They will also get referrals for free OSHA trainings to bolster their employment qualifications and to learn how to protect themselves if they work in the future.