



As 2021 comes to a close, we pause to reflect on what we're grateful for. We are grateful that our doors have remained open - providing critical legal services to those who need it most. We are grateful for the chance to bear witness to the strength and bravery of immigrants. But we also acknowledge continued grief due to the pandemic. We have seen first-hand the profound impact on our immigrant friends - many of whom are pandemic heroes, frontline essential workers who serve our community day after day, often at great expense. Here at American Gateways, we continue navigating the changing immigration landscape, and walking alongside those we serve to help them access justice in a system rooted in injustice.

Our clients often come to us in a time of crisis. From being forced to flee their beloved homeland, leaving an abusive partner, or escaping human trafficking, to being held in detention for simply seeking safety, clients go unimaginable lengths to build a more hopeful future for themselves and their loved ones. Our role at American Gateways is to provide information and advocacy to give immigrants a fighting chance against a system that is stacked against them, immigrants like Aida.

Aida came to our offices after she made the courageous decision to leave her abusive spouse; a US citizen who had used his legal status as power over her.

He threatened her with deportation and refused to help legalize her status. “I always hoped that it would get better, so I went back - but the truth is, I was scared. I saw him do crazy things, and I knew that if I didn’t comply, I’d be next.” Aida left to protect her children. She escaped to a new city and was working hard to build a stable and happy home for her children, but experienced great financial uncertainty due to her lack of legal status. With American Gateways’ legal support, Aida became a permanent resident and was granted the right to work, all without needing to rely on her abusive spouse. *“I felt safe. American Gateways knew what they were doing. They gave me the resources I needed. It was like hope to me.”*



[Supporters like you give the gift of hope for survivors like Aida.](#) Your support today makes it possible for thousands of low-income immigrants in Central Texas to receive help:

- Individuals fleeing torture and persecution in their home countries who are detained in one of four federal detention centers,
- Survivors of crime, family violence, and human trafficking who are left to navigate the immigration system on their own,
- Young DREAMers with DACA status, seeking to remain in the country they call home,
- Long-time permanent residents who are ready to become US citizens and

vote!

In 2021, the American Gateways team empowered more than 15,000 immigrants with information, assistance, and full legal representation. We partnered with hundreds of volunteer translators and pro bono attorneys who contributed over \$800,000 in service. We represented nearly 200 survivors of crime and human trafficking. We helped over 200 young DREAMers apply for their DACA status. We believe in the generational impact of immigration legal services and invite you to partner with us in this work.

The events of the past several years have highlighted the challenges immigrants face. Despite the high hopes for the Biden Administration, we continue to see abuses at the US-Mexico border, from mass deportations and outright violence against Haitians, to the continuation of Trump-era policies that deny the basic right to seek refuge. Join us to help immigrants access justice. [Would you consider donating today to provide legal help to those who need it most and can't afford an attorney?](#)

**The need is overwhelming – we have to turn away four out of every five people seeking legal services. Our immediate goal is to increase our capacity by 25% to help more immigrants like Aida.**



We are grateful for your investment in transforming lives like Aida's. Earlier this year, in the midst of this global pandemic, Aida was reunited with her eldest daughter, Grace, after more than 13 years of separation. *"Before American*

*Gateways, I never dreamed of my four children being in the same room together. A new path unraveled in front of me.”*

With deep gratitude,  
Rebecca Lightsey and Edna Yang  
Co-Executive Directors

[Donate today to offer freedom, safety, and hope to an asylum-seeker; a DREAMer; a survivor.](#)

**I advocate for Aida**

