



# AMERICAN GATEWAYS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

**January 2023**

## **From the Desk of Edna Yang, Co-Executive Director**

### **President Biden Visits El Paso, and Texas Lawmakers Come to Austin**

The new year has started with a flurry of immigration activity here in Texas.

Over the holidays, the Supreme Court left Title 42 in place. This ill-conceived program expels migrants to Mexico when they attempt to enter the country unlawfully.

After a [wave of migrants](#) arrived in El Paso, fleeing persecution and seeking a better life, President Biden visited the area. And now the Texas Legislature has convened in Austin, with a rash of good and bad immigration proposals on the table.

The President recently announced policies to let 30,000 migrants each month from Haiti, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua enter the United States and be able to work lawfully for up to two years. They would need to apply from their home country and identify someone to support them economically in the U.S. This is problematic because it ignores the realities of those forced to flee their home and places an almost impossible burden on some of the most vulnerable who deserve the opportunity to seek protection under our asylum laws.

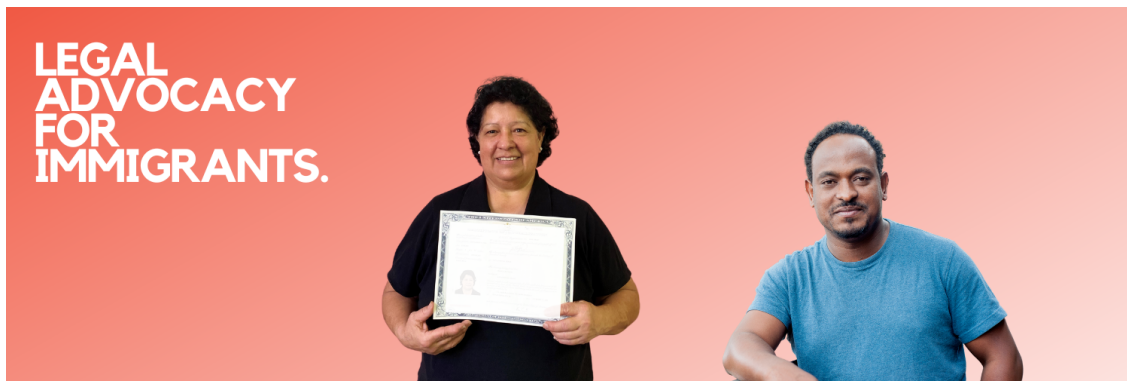
Even though this new rule offers a legal pathway for people in crisis to come to the US, it prevents many more who are highly vulnerable from doing so: those who have no access to a financial sponsor, a safe and legal route to the US, or even the ability to apply for the program online. It leaves those who are fleeing persecution and harm stranded in Mexico in unsafe and inadequate conditions, or leaves them stranded somewhere along the route from their home countries to the US. It is a stop gap measure that will not provide any real relief to vulnerable migrants or to the impacted border communities trying to offer humanitarian aid and services. It's unfortunate to see the Biden Administration trying the status quo approach of incentivizing migrants to come to ports of entry, when we have

seen this same approach fail time and again.

While we appreciate the administration's work to try and reduce backlogs in the asylum system with the recent Interim Asylum Rule, we hope that additional resources will be made available not only to the asylum offices but also to those providers working to ensure that immigrants going through this new process understand it and have representation. High quality legal representation like the kind we offer at American Gateways strengthens our democracy, guarantees due process rights, and ensures a more equitable process. Without adequate representation, many who have the right to remain in the U.S. are often deported and separated from their families and homes.

It's critical that we make federal policies better align with the needs of people fleeing persecution and working to make a better life for themselves and their new communities.

For Texas lawmakers at the state capitol, we will be watching closely to see how policy changes affect the clients we serve. We encourage state leaders to show compassion and remember the economic benefits immigrants provide to our state and to remember that most Texans descend from immigrants who themselves once came to this country seeking better lives.



## What we do

As we've noted before, our office is helping Afghan families who have relocated in Central Texas. The Austin Chronicle just did a story on one family's journey to safety and security here in Central Texas, including American Gateway's role in that process. You can read the story [here](#).

With our work, we help families like the Osians stay together, and help other families reunite. Last month, Anali Looper, the director of our Waco office, was able to help Maria bring her mother Elena to the U.S. as a Legal Permanent Resident!



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## Want to know more about our work?

We invite you, or anyone you know to our Virtual Immigrant Justice 101 events, which take place quarterly. Our next event will be on March 10, 2023. You can register [here](#).

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## Team Anniversaries

Congratulations to our teammates!

[Robert Painter](#), Legal Director - 9 years.

[Erika Gonzalez](#), Legal Caseworker, Outreach & Communications Coordinator - 8 years

[Chris Anderson](#), Accountant - 5 years

[Rosa Hernandez](#), Grants and Operations Manager - 4 years

## A few new items of interest

[Almost 1 million immigrants granted US citizenship in 2022](#)

[Economic contribution of Immigrants in Texas](#)

[How San Antonio became a hub for Immigrants](#)

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