Project description:

The Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center Detained Deportation Defense Team often works with people in detention who have depression, PTSD, anxiety, and other serious mental health conditions. Many of our clients have experienced torture, sexual assault and other violence in their home countries. Their mental health is put under further stress after undergoing a long, difficult journey to the U.S. in addition to the many stressors of being detained once they arrive. Mental health care is almost non-existent in detention centers, and most people do not feel comfortable speaking with ICE psychologists, especially if they have thoughts of self-harm, because they fear being put into solitary confinement or other forms of punishment.

Furthermore, when our clients are released from detention and enter their new communities in the U.S., they often continue to face significant obstacles in finding housing, employment, and educational resources. Most people do not know what support may be available in their new communities, and language and cultural barriers exacerbate this issue.

As a result, many of our clients have significant non-legal needs both in detention and after they are released. The Lorretto Fellow would provide crucial non-legal support to our most vulnerable clients while they are in detention and, in some cases, in the weeks after they are released from detention.

Potential Fellow Duties:

- Wellness visits with clients in detention that the Detained Team identifies as particularly vulnerable;
- Working with other members of the detained team to identify non-legal needs of clients, such as medical or conditions advocacy;
- Assisting recently released clients connect with social services in their new communities; and
- Creating a resource bank of social services in other cities.

Position Requirements:

- Fellow must be fluent in Spanish
- Fellow must be able to commit 20 hours/week to the position
- Preference for a Fellow with a driver’s license and vehicle so they could visit clients in-person at the Otero County Processing Center and the El Paso Processing Center
- Preference for a Fellow with experience working with people in traumatic situations
- Scheduling: Fellows need to be available for at least some hours each week during visitation hours at the detention centers (M-F 8-5:00) and a couple hours a week from 9-5:00 to attend check-ins with the team. Other than that, hours can be flexible, and it would be helpful if the hours were consistent from week to week.