In 2018, the city of Denver was selected to join the Vera Institute of Justice’s Safety and Fairness for Everyone (SAFE) Network—a growing group of jurisdictions around the U.S. that are committed to keeping families together and communities safe and strong by protecting due process and providing legal representation to immigrants facing deportation. SAFE Network Members have dedicated public funding to deportation defense, focusing on serving individuals who are detained.

**Why representation matters**
Because immigrants facing deportation do not have the guarantee of an attorney to represent them, 70 percent of immigrants detained at the Aurora Detention Center face deportation alone. Representation promotes due process and dignity, and results in better outcomes—represented immigrants are up to ten times more likely to establish a right to remain in the United States.

**SAFE Program Description: Denver, Colorado**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Legal Service Providers:</strong></th>
<th>Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Populations Served:</strong></td>
<td>Detained residents of Denver who make under 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines</td>
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<td><strong>Detention Centers Served:</strong></td>
<td>Aurora Contract Detention Facility (Aurora, CO)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Method of Identifying Clients:</strong></td>
<td>Referrals from community and from the Legal Orientation Program at Aurora Contract Detention Facility</td>
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</table>

**Sources**
1. Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC):
Making an Impact in Denver

36 Clients represented in Denver, CO

16 Average years living in the United States

39 Children with a parent represented in Denver

*Data from 2/1/2019–1/14/2020

Client Stories

Jonathan, a native of El Salvador, fled to the United States after being beaten by gang members and left comatose when he refused to join. Upon arrival, he reunified with his father—a lawful permanent resident—before moving in with his aunt in Denver, who he considers his “second mother.” After living in the U.S. for nearly two decades, Jonathan was apprehended by ICE and detained at the Aurora Contract Detention Facility.

At Aurora, Jonathan was offered representation by the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN) through the SAFE Network. Before he met the RMIAN attorney, he already had an initial immigration hearing, and the immigration judge overlooked that he was eligible for relief. It was only through legal screening by the attorney that Jonathan learned he was eligible to apply for a complex form of legal relief through his father. If not for the universal representation model and RMIAN’s counsel, he would have gone unrepresented and would have likely been deported.

After months of enduring separation from his family, Jonathan was granted relief, allowing him to live safely and securely alongside his loved ones in Denver. He aspires to start his own business, become a homeowner, and continue helping to support his aunt. Jonathan reports that his RMIAN attorney made sure he felt confident, empowered, and knew what to expect as he navigated the complicated legal process.

Roberto, has lived in the U.S. for over twenty years as a lawful permanent resident. Ten months ago, he was apprehended and detained in Aurora, Colorado. Although the immigration judge screened him for relief, it was not until he met an attorney from RMIAN that he learned he was eligible for Cancellation of Removal. Roberto and his SAFE attorney worked closely with his family to gather evidence of the hardship Roberto would face if deported from the United States. At the conclusion of his final hearing, Roberto was granted relief from deportation.

When asked about this experience, Roberto said: “Once detained in ICE [custody]… days passed and I was confused. In reality, I [had] no idea how to face the proceedings, like many of the detainees that are here in the detention center… [My lawyer] not only allowed for me to retain my status as a permanent resident, but I can be together with my son and family.”

*The name has been changed to a pseudonym to protect the individual’s identity.

Roberto with his nieces and nephews.

*Data from 2/1/2019–1/14/2020

Roberto with his nieces and nephews.