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00:00:01,450 --> 00:00:15,950

(Narrator)

Lilian Jimenez, Esquire. Associate Director Office of Welcoming Centers for Refugees and Immigrants Services, Illinois Department of Human Services.

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00:00:15,950 --> 00:00:24,110

(Lilian Jimenez)

At DHS, we have our local offices. But sometimes people are intimidated by going into a state government office.

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One reason why we have the Welcoming Center model – this past year, in these past couple of years in particular,

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has been more and more fear about whether accessing services benefits from the state of Illinois will impact somebody's immigration status.

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That's the reason why it's in a community based setting. Sometimes one of them is in a church.

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So they're familiar. They're familiar with the priest, are familiar with the program officer, and they can go in there and ask questions.

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00:00:46,520 --> 00:00:54,230

And without fear, they can kind of be themselves and ask real basic questions and get information

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00:00:54,230 --> 00:00:58,490

and get case management and assess them about what they might be eligible for.

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00:00:58,490 --> 00:01:03,530

My mom was unable to work, were not able to get on a lot of social services because she didn't have a Social

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00:01:03,530 --> 00:01:08,120

Security number. That led to a life of very extreme poverty for our family.

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Our Welcoming Centers are promoting having staff and leadership that reflect the community that the Welcoming Centers serve.

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To have you know very, very grassroots staff and community members and volunteers working with them.

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00:01:20,780 --> 00:01:28,430

So they are able to really assess and understand the needs of folks and to also answer any questions and address any

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00:01:28,430 --> 00:01:34,670

fears that the community has in a place and in a manner that they're familiar with and that they are comfortable.

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00:01:34,670 --> 00:01:42,079

That is the best way to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services.