

Organization Supports Detroit's Most Vulnerable During Pandemic

Latino Family Services provides home-based pantries, counseling, senior support, and many more services in Detroit

DETROIT - [Latino Family Services](#) is a non-profit organization located at 1145 Lawndaleen. For decades she has dedicated herself to strengthening the migrant community with services ranging from groceries to legal support.

Due to the pandemic, their education program for children and the help they provide to young people with drug problems have been paused, but most of the activities they normally provide continue on their usual schedules and are more challenging than ever.

Serving the community in COVID-19 times

Lidia Reyes-Flores, executive director of Latino Family Services, told *Detroit Catholic in Spanish* about the services that are still available amid the pandemic.

"Thank God and until she says we will continue here, without fail once a week we are distributing pantries. But what has been most needed by the pandemic is psychological and medical assistance. In this time there have been many cases of depression and anxiety," says Lidia, who is a St. Anne's parishioner.

The Latino association currently operates through remote work from home, only Lidia continues to go to the [local](#) to organize what cannot be done from home.

"Now what worries me most is the elderly, here it is not like in Latin America, here people abandon their grandparents. What we do is bring them food, we also go to the pharmacy for their medications," explains the director of Latino Family Services.

Lidia and her team are keeping busy and looking at the different ways they can help their community, "now we are putting together packages for street people, a basic cleaning kit, water, transportation tickets and clothes", account.



Just a month and a half ago Latino Family Services still offered breakfasts, today all the pantries are delivered complying with all the necessary hygiene measures so that the COVID-19 does not spread. (Photo courtesy of Latino Family Services)

The coronavirus has also left great lessons for the director of the association, "Now I know that I need a program of doctors by call or video call, it would be incredible if it were in operation now, but sometimes these crises must pass to know what else is needed to help ", assures Lidia.

Multiple ways to support Detroit's Latinos

At Latino Family Service they do everything, give pantries every week, provide translation services, offer psychological and medical help, programs for the hours when children are no longer in school and for youth with addictions, they also have support programs for veterans and teach courses for women to gain job skills.

They legally advise on immigration problems, renewal of legal residence and give food to people on the street. They also help people get a job.

"We also provide recommendations to the financial aid community, we give them information to help them become independent, access bank accounts, credit or perhaps manage and improve their credit. We make it a coach so that people learn to save and plan for the future, "says Gabriela Ramírez Arellano, a former volunteer for this organization.



Lidia hopes that as soon as the health contingency ends they can return to offer the activities for the children. (Photo courtesy of Latino Family Services)

Thanks to Divine Providence as well as the few employees, volunteers and donations the work continues

Latino Family Services will provide its services with four full-time employees: the director, a secretary, an accountant, and the person in charge of caring for veterans.

Lidia Reyes-Flores, the organization's director, grew up in Detroit and is a social worker. She has worked in prisons with children and youth in vulnerable situations. She also studied administration, knows about tax issues and worked in the medical sector. Apart from the above, Ms Reyes is an expert translator in the courts, income with which she supports some expenses of the organization.

“I am a devout Catholic, for me faith is everything. I grew up in this community and now I have the opportunity to return what she gave me, it is time to do my part with the help of God, ”explains Lidia.

There are two large organizations that contribute to Latino Family Services: the Health Departments and some churches. “Different Catholic and Adventist churches help me. If I ask you for something, thank God you are always there to support me. I know I have them. They send me workers in the summer, they pay them and they help here, ”says the director of the organization.

Detroit has always distinguished itself for supporting the migrant community and during this pandemic it was no exception. These are difficult times for all, but Lidia has faith that Latino Family Services will have the means to

continue helping and she places herself in the hands of divine providence, "I am here only for God, I only administer. I have complete faith in God and all those who work with me. We will continue helping our community in Detroit until God wants, "she concludes.