

Overview of Access California Services

Founded in 1998, Access California Services (AccessCal) is a culturally sensitive community-based organization dedicated to empowering all underserved populations, with a focus on Arab-American & Muslim-American communities. AccessCal strives to enhance quality of life and foster self-determination through direct health & human services and has the vision for each individual to lead a dignified and enriched life.

The history behind establishing AccessCal begins with a story of an immigrant single mother of three, in search of a culturally and linguistically competent therapist. This woman is Nahla Kayali, Founder & Executive Director of AccessCal. Nahla was in need of a therapist. Nahla went to a mainstream therapist and felt like she was talking to someone who did not understand her culture. Nahla then decided to visit her local mosque but did not receive the professional help she needed. This need to find culturally competent and experienced care was a struggle. Nahla thought of other families within the Arab/Muslim communities that were experiencing the same challenge but remaining silent. This need prompted Nahla to have a vision for establishing an organization for her community that would provide culturally and linguistically sensitive professional care in health and human services with the goal to ensure the community had equal access to resources and services.

AccessCal, known as a trusted messenger, is unique in the community for its capacity to deliver wrap-around health and human services in 13 different languages: English, Arabic, Spanish, Pashto, Farsi, Dari, Tigrinya, Tigre, Armenian, French, Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi. AccessCal has the overall goal to help underserved community members become self-sufficient, healthy, and contributing citizens. Through the support of close to 30 staff members including AmeriCorps Members, AccessCal delivers an estimated 65,000 services to over 11,000 unduplicated clients, annually. AccessCal provides the following programs/services: Mental Health Services, Health Coverage Access, Employment Services, Emergency Financial Assistance, Immigration & Citizenship Assistance, Client Advocacy, Translation & Interpretation, English as a Second Language classes, Parenting, and Self-Help Classes, Refugee Social Services and Refugee Youth Mentoring Services.

AccessCal is a strong partner in the community and takes part in several different collaborations with government agencies, faith-based institutions, schools, and other service providers in an effort to help ensure community members have equal access to services and are civically engaged. AccessCal is also a host to several university and college students per year who choose AccessCal as their service provider of choice to complete their required internship hours. AccessCal's growth is a result of our strong funding partnerships at the federal, state, county, and local level. AccessCal also receives a great amount of funding from foundations, corporations and private donors.

AccessCal continues to be praised by different entities across the nation for our capacity to deliver culturally and linguistically sensitive services that help empower community members in need. AccessCal has also continued to be at the frontline delivering services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.