



Juan | OIDO case management team lead

Giving 150%
to a Community
of Thousands



Juan was born in Mexico, in a town right across the border from South Texas. He enjoys spending time outdoors and watching movies.

Juan became a U.S. citizen many years ago. The experience with the officer who conducted his citizenship interview—making him feel so comfortable amid his nervousness—inspired him to seek a career in immigration, where he could provide the same respectful treatment and comfort to other prospective citizens. Juan's thoughtful nature combined with his charismatic, hardworking approach have made him successful throughout his career, and especially as a case manager at the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO).

Since serving in the U.S. Army, Juan has worked in various roles advocating for people in need, providing counseling, directing them to resources, and helping them find paths to success. Working in the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Victim Assistance Program, he provided support to undocumented individuals who had been victims of crime, including human trafficking.

Later, as a post-release worker for a nonprofit organization, he traveled across the country checking on undocumented minors and their families following their release from detention facilities. He made sure children were in school and thriving and that the families were aware of every resource available. Not surprisingly, he felt more than prepared when he heard about the case management position at OIDO. “I am grateful and privileged to have the opportunity to help my community in the Rio Grande Valley.”

SPREADING GOOD WORKS AND SPREADING THE WORD

At OIDO, Juan’s approach to helping detainees starts with the understanding that individuals who enter this country may be overwhelmed. His vision is to change any negative perception and earn their trust, by showing how much he cares and helping as much as he can—the way that first immigration officer did for him.

WORKING TO SERVE OTHERS

Whenever he helps a detainee, he sees it as an opportunity to not only help them, but to spread the word about OIDO and its services. It has paid off, with people in his community becoming more aware of Juan and OIDO by the day.

In one case, Juan learned that a detainee was being bullied. The detainee didn’t want to speak up because he had a pending immigration case and worried that filing a complaint would impact his case. Juan met with the detainee, built rapport, assured him that his immigration case would not be affected, and the detainee agreed to talk. He reported the bullying incident, and the facility quickly separated the detainees.

In another instance, a detainee was introduced to Juan after feeling pressure to sign a series of forms he didn’t understand. He was worried about what he’d signed, so Juan reached out to his point of contact at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE immediately sent out a deportation officer to explain to that detainee (and a sizable group of others) what the documents said and answer all their questions, easing their minds.

Juan continues to broaden his community. Aiding him in his efforts are ICE officers and facility staff. Case managers often work with facility staff to understand and find solutions to complaints.

“Appreciate what you have because there are other people who wish they had half of what you’re taking for granted.”

Favorite dish

Seafood

Hobby

Going outdoors and traveling.

Favorite movie or show

Anything that has to do with Marvel or “The Avengers.”

Biggest accomplishment outside of work

To have served in the U.S. Army and deployed to Iraq.

Favorite book

“How Successful People Lead,” by John Maxwell

Favorite quote

“Appreciate what you have because there are other people who wish they had half of what you’re taking for granted.” (personal quote)

